

**Mapping the Rural Adolescent Girls' Participation in  
Residential Non-Formal Education Program –  
A Study in Lunkaransar Block, Rajasthan, India**

By

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## ABSTRACT

The present study, "Mapping Rural Adolescent Girl's Participation in Residential Non-Formal Education Program – A Study in Lunkaransar Block, Rajasthan", was an attempt to understand the dimensions of rural adolescent girls' participation in the *Balika Shivar* Program. It is a six month residential non-formal education program being organized by Urmul in Western Rajasthan, India. A sample of 100 girls (50 who had attended and 50 who had not attended the shivar) was taken from 10 villages from the girls had participated in the program. The data was collected using the interview schedule and focused group discussions. The life skills of the girls was assessed by administering the Life Skills Assessment Inventory.

It was found that the study sample of girls who participated in the shivar were mostly in the age group of 10-15 years, unmarried and belonged to low income, marginalized agricultural families. After the shivar many girls could continue their education in formal school system. The barriers to the education, perceived by the girls, were economic, social and structural in nature.

The decision of the girl's participation in the shivar was the one largely made by their families. This decision was influenced by two kinds of factors – the inhibiting factors and the facilitating factors – both from within the family as well as from the community. Both these factors had a push and pull effect on each other and it was only when the facilitating i.e. the positive factors were stronger than the negative / inhibiting factors, that the girls were allowed to join the shivar.

The curriculum at the shivar was multifaceted one which helped in all round development of the girls – cognitive, physical and emotional. The various aspects of the shivar that were liked by the girls and that enhanced their development were the opportunity to study, participate in games and develop team spirit, do creative work in an environment that used methods and techniques that were participatory in nature and the experience of living together. The girls had several suggestions for the organization for future shivars, some of which were incorporating skill building as a part of the curriculum.

Understanding the effects girls perceived because of their participation and assessing the development of life skills in girls who had participated in the shivar vs. those who had not participated provided insights about the multifarious influences on the girl's lives. The effects that the girls perceived due to their participation ranged from enhancement of knowledge, improvement of interpersonal skills, increased self confidence, higher social status in their communities, development of leadership abilities and changed aspirations.

Assessment of life skills development of the girls who had attended the shivir and to compare it with that of the girls who did not attend was an important aspect of the study. It was found that there was a significant difference between the girls who attended the shivir and the girls who did not, regarding their life skills development.

The shivir had a multifaceted impact on the girls that equipped them to handle diverse real life situations. The shivirs are an important alternative for education of the girl child, deprived of the primary school for entering the mainstream system as well as basic exposure to a more formalized system of education.

## CHAPTER - 1

### INTRODUCTION

*“By education, I mean an all round drawing out of the best in child and man – body, mind and spirit.”*

*- Mahatma Gandhi*

Education has been recognized as the centerpiece of human resource development, it is realized at the highest levels that education will play a key role in balanced socio-economic development. The word ‘education’ implies the characteristics of both the types of knowledge, viz., material and spiritual. Literacy is not the end of education nor even the beginning. It is one of the means whereby man and woman can be educated. Education stands for the balanced and harmonious development of all the aspects of human personality. It is the key which opens the door to life by widening one’s vision, develops the sense of concerns towards the fellow being and thus promotes national development. (Gupta, 1992.)

Education is one of the important variables that determine the status of women. Taking into account the different literacy rates, the enrolment for higher and vocational education, and the drop out rate, one can find out the extent of discrimination that prevails in a given society at a given period of time. (Joshi, 1994). The difference between men and women cannot be reduced as long as there is a disparity between the two at the educational level. (Bhasin, 1973).

In India education for women has been identified as the major instrument for development. The impact of women on themselves, their family and society cannot be over emphasized. The contribution women can make towards economic development of families as micro unit of the social system and also to the economic

system through productive labor need to be monetarily assessed to understand the impact of women's education. (Rehman and Biswal, 1993).

Women constitute about half of the population and therefore there can't be happiness and full development, so long as women remain depressed and exploited. No society can be free, where and just until its women enjoy freedom and justice and opportunities for utilizing their full potential. (Sapru, 1989)

Illiteracy, ignorance and low status of women have direct bearing on children, their health and education. Areas where there is low female literacy, are also characterized by under-development, low employment, low per capita income, low nutritional level with heavy concentration of scheduled communities and landless agricultural workers. Low female literacy is highly correlated to high fertility rates, high population growth rate, and high infant and child mortality rate. There is a high association of female literacy with female age at marriage, life expectancy, participation in modern sectors of economy and female enrolment in schools. (Pillai,1995).

Primary education has not improved qualitatively in most of the rural and backward areas. The subjects taught are not related to the environment of children; the methods of teaching are outmoded, rigid, and uninteresting; work based or activity based education has not been implemented. All these have led to dropping out of the children from the schools. Of 100 children enrolled in class I only 23 reach class VIII, attaining the desired level of literacy. (Pillai,1995).

Girl children today are targets of attacks even before they are born. Even among the educated, urban, well-to-do people, advanced medical technology such as amniocentesis and super sonography are used and if the foetus is found to be female, abortion is induced.

Even before the girl child is born, parents view her as a liability. This attitude is rooted in a complex set of social, cultural and historical factors. The dowry system, economic dependence of women and social customs and traditions are the main causes of the neglect of the girl child and discrimination against her. Girl child is viewed as an economic burden and social responsibility, she is unwanted and her arrival is not considered as a joy and discrimination begins immediately after birth, with respect to feeding practices, health and medical care.

In the rural areas, about 70% of the non-starters i.e. those who have never been to schools are girls. As mothers took on the role of the girl as a second mother to look after the younger siblings and shoulder the responsibility of household work, in charge of fetching water, fuel, fodder, cleaning and cooking, the girl child gets handicapped and conditioned by the attitude of the mother and the family and the traditional sex role, and going to school becomes secondary. The economic value of the girl child, to the family and to the society is never recognized. (Pillai,1995).

Conditioned by social norms that define service, subservience, sacrifice, tolerance and uncritical obedience as the virtues to be emulated by the women, these girls get little chance to allow their own spontaneity, freedom and criticality to find expression. Therefore adolescent girls in a country like ours need special interventions that are geared not just to extend or substitute primary schooling, but to address their basic needs to discover their own potential and become empowered citizens.

The challenge of providing such broad educational opportunities for girls can be met only through diverse strategies and by various actors and agencies, working in close collaboration with specific communities. There have been several initiatives in the country that have directly or indirectly provided educational inputs for adolescent girls, some of which have focussed on health and nutrition and others on education and economic empowerment etc. (Government of India, 2001)

The National Literacy Mission was started in 1988 to mobilize all dropouts and persons between the age of 15 to 45 in a mass literacy campaign. It was converted into Total Literacy Mission in 1990 with more emphasis on women education. It claims that out of the total of 620 lakh persons made literate, 62% are women. (Seth, 2001).

The gap in literacy rates was also planned to be bridged through other forms of education namely non-formal education for children in the age group of 6 to 14 and adult education for persons between 15 to 35 years of age. During the Eighth Plan, the estimated enrolment of children through the non-formal education centres was 258.12 lakh, out of which 97.83 lakh or 37.9 per cent of all enrolled children were girls. (Seth, 2001).

*Non formal education* has thus taken an exclusive role in our country as a new concept of education. Non formal education is nothing but adult education imparted through non-formal means and agencies. (Shah and Bhan, 1981). It tries to utilize a part of the resources of the learner in building his or her potentiality for further action and provides a gap between segments of learning in formal education. Generally, non-formal education aims at mastering the physical environment, upgrading the working skill and fulfilling the human personality. (Carl and Jacob, 1971). It aims at improving the efficiency of an individual in a specific vocation or skill. Three main aspects of non-formal education are :

- a) the identification of learners and environmental needs
- b) the diversification of curriculum to meet those needs
- c) relating the program to practical situations so that the messages are easily transmitted.

Education and learning, far from being limited to the period of attendance at school, should extend throughout life, include all skills and branches of knowledge, use all possible means and give the

opportunity to all people for full development of personality; the educational and learning process in which children, young people and adults of all ages are involved in the course of their lives, in whatever form should be considered as a whole. (UNESCO, 1985)

Thus, the term *life long education* is now being used as a reinterpretation of the term 'education'. Its whole emphasis is on making the term 'education' more functional, relevant and recurrent. (Mohanty, 1988). It bridges the past with the present and the future and makes an individual learn continuously. Life long education is an integral part of the scheme of development of an individual, a society, a state or a nation. The recent stress on life long education has brought in significant changes in the formal education systems. It has been making the structure, content and methods of formal education more flexible and open, giving scope to people of various age groups especially women to learn either in groups or in individual settings. (Baros, 1978).

Over the years, The concept of *life skill development* has gained importance as their effective acquisition can influence the way one feels about oneself and others and can enhance one's productivity, efficacy, self-esteem and self-confidence. They also provide the tools and techniques to improve interpersonal relationships. **LIFE SKILLS** have been defined by World Health Organization as 'the abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demand and changes of everyday life'. Life skills are essentially those abilities that help to promote mental well being and competency of young people as they face the realities of life.

There are three broad areas of life skills : *Thinking skills, Social skills and Negotiating skills*. Thinking skills include problem solving, thinking critically, processing information and exercising choice, making informed decisions and setting goals. Social skills include appreciating/validating others, building positive relationships with peer groups and family, listening and communicating effectively, taking



responsibility and coping with stress. Negotiating skills include self-realization that enables an individual to understand ones values, goals and strengths and weaknesses. Thus negotiating skills need to be enhanced at two levels – within oneself and with others.

During adolescence, life skills development is more an active process. Despite superior intellectual abilities, the adolescent's behavior is occasionally colored by emotions rather than by rationality. Frequently the adolescents need to exercise skills to indicate and establish individuality and independence.

In order to wean the adolescent girls away from their household responsibilities and to provide a supportive learning environment, several organizations have Residential Camps or Centres extremely effective. These evolved as an accelerated strategy to make education available to adolescent girls and young women, and also to prepare a cadre of trained women leaders for specific programs in areas where female literacy levels are very low. The centres provide intensive care courses for several months or even a couple of years, while camps run for shorter periods. The focus is on integrating formal instructions with life skills, vocational skills and social awareness, to develop a model for holistic education for girls. (Government of India, 2001)

## RAJASTHAN

More than half of the land of Rajasthan lies in the arid and semi arid districts. Separated by the 550km long Aravalli range, this region comprises of the entire districts of Bikaner, Jaisalmer and Jodhpur and portions of Nagore and Churu districts. Annual rainfall is low ranging from 10cms to 40cms and is very erratically

disturbed in these parts. Temperatures range from 48 to 50 degrees in the summers and below freezing points in winters. (Urmul, 2001)

In the last quarter of this century the Indian Thar has witnessed one of the fastest demographic growth in the country and has a history of being the most populous deserts of the world. The decennial growth in the six desert districts of the Thar has been around 32.5 and is much higher than the state average of 25.46 and 20.01 for the entire country. (Urmul, 2001)

Not only the physical geography and ecology of the area is harsh and inhospitable, there are other problems such as acute water scarcity, prevalence of endemic diseases and epidemics, economic inequity and discrimination, inadequate communication and infrastructure facilities as well as scattered and mobile population. Apart from this the traditional conservative practices and the persistence of a feudal ethos continually keep the women in the arid zone silenced, exhausted, confined to the interiors, veiled and secluded from birth to death. Literacy among the women in rural areas is abysmally low (around 10%). (Urmul, 2001) The area is typical for having one of the lowest sex ratios in the state as well as in India. There is a strong emphasis on the need to produce more male children that has led to the persistence of the poor health status of women, systematic discrimination and neglect of the girl child, high birth rate and a large family size.

The position of adult literacy in the state of Rajasthan has been not satisfying as seen in the datas collected earlier. The total population of the state according to 1971 Census is 257.65 lakhs. Of these 208.5 were illiterates. There has also been a great variation in the literacy rates of males and females in different districts. (Rao and Bhatt, 1980) Many organizations and programs are being run in Rajasthan for its socio-economic upgradation. The program for adult education in the state during the earlier plans was carried out under Community Development Programs. It was only later that the Education Department took it up. Also, in the Fifth Five Year Plan

other literacy programs like, Farmer's Functional Literacy, Functional Literacy and Non formal education programs were launched. The efforts of various governmental and non governmental agencies have also helped to improve the status of education in the state.

The Literacy Rates in Rajasthan since the year 1951 are as follows:

LITERACY RATE 1951 -2001			
Year	Persons	Males	Females
1951	8.50	13.88	2.66
1961	18.12	28.08	7.01
1971	22.57	33.87	10.06
1981	30.11	44.77	14.00
1991	38.55	54.99	20.44
2001	61.03	76.46	44.34

*Source : Census of India, 2001*

There has been a tremendous increase in the literacy rates of males as well as females in the state as an impact of the constant efforts made by the government and voluntary sector. The number of females who are literate have increased to more than the double in Census,2001 to what they were in Census,1991. One of the non-governmental organizations working in the area of education, health and income generation is the Urmul Trust.

#### URMUL Trust

Urmul trust represents a family of organizations working towards social and economic change in the lives of the people of interior regions of western Rajasthan. Developmental interventions in the Urmul Trust family revolve around a core of

strategic sectors like collective mobilization, access to health and education services, empowering people on food, fodder and water security, supporting livelihoods, relevant and action oriented research, training in skill enhancement and confidence and promoting issues of human rights and public advocacy. These interventions in different sectors cut across and supplement each other in pursuance of the final goal of improving the quality of life of the vulnerable communities of the Thar.

Education has been a major thrust area in Urmul since 1988. The Trust had decided to concentrate on improving the existing formal system of primary education of the government. It provides infrastructural support and training inputs to teachers in non-formal schools in an attempt to integrate dropouts and non-attendees into the formal schooling system. The Marushalas and the Anganshala program have evolved out of these attempts. The Trust is the first NGO to implement ICDS (Integrated Child Development Scheme) in Rajasthan and thus also focuses on the children from the age group of 0-6 years so as to develop innovative material on preschool learning.

Presently there are thirteen organizations under this Trust, all working together towards the same goal. One of these is the URMUL SETU working in Lunkaransar block of the Bikaner district since 1984. It is currently working in 120 Villages and Chaks in their region. Main activities carried out in the organization are group activities like Mahila Mandals, Purush Mandals, Kishori Mandals; development of women and young girls; education; health; income generation; providing relief works in emergencies etc.

Lunkaransar is one of the backward blocks of the district with a population of 1,56,000. The dominant castes of the region are – Jats, Bishnoi and Rajputs in the upper caste heirarchy and Meghwaal, Nayaks and Sansi as the backward castes (22% approx.). The most of the rural populace is dependent on rain-fed agriculture, in which bajra, gawar and moth are the monsoon crops. Rest are the agricultural labourers. The rural youth lack any opportunity for gainful employment.

The overall literacy rate of the block is 22.69% whereas the female literacy rate is abysmally low at 10.38%. All revenue villages have a school sanctioned, but most of them are either permanently closed or single teacher outfits. The most important trouble in girl education is non-availability of female teachers in these schools which restrict the parents to send their daughters to school. The government services are ineffective due to the absenteeism of the people manning these. Educational standards are poor, and there is a low enrolment of females. Innovative education programs such as Shikshakarmi and Lok Jumbish are being implemented across the tehsil.

Though there are many schemes for girls education wherein the girls get fees waivers and free books upto the 8<sup>th</sup> standard, NFE centres run by Lok Jumbish and Saraswati Behan Yojana, it has not been possible to get the girls attracted to the formal education system. There has been increase in the enrolment rate of girls of the age group of 5-10 years in last four years but the retention rate has been very low due to lack of women instructors. But the adolescent girls in the age group of 10-15 years, a significant portion of the eligible population, are always left out of any such process. Following are the reasons for almost negligible rate of enrolment of the girls in this age group (Urmul, 2001) –

1. Most of the girls belonging to this age group are already married and there is a social pressure on the parents to not to send them alone to the far away schools.
2. The girls stay in spread out 'dhanis' (isolated hamlets which are far and in between the fields) and it is not very easy for them to travel to far off distances.
3. They stay engaged in the household chores and the parents do not feel it important enough to spare 5 years of their ward's time for formal primary education.

In this scenario, Residential Education Camps for Girls have provided some glimmer of hope, which is catching up fast as a very useful medium of education to attract the

girls to the education system. These are intensive in nature, where the girls receive primary education in the course of 5-7 months staying in the camps for the whole of the duration. Along with the formal education the girls are also exposed to other aspects affecting their daily lives that include behavioral, physiographical and social issues. Four such camps have been held in Lunkaransar from 1998 to 2001.

### **Significance of the Study**

Over the years, education has expanded enormously all over the world. Almost everyone thought that the key to development lay in more and more education, thus investing lavishly in it. As a result, the formal education system has expanded severalfold. But, this rapid expansion has taken place at the cost of quality, especially in developing countries like India. (Singh, 1994). This would include the facilities available, teaching and management skills, the process of teaching, learner achievement as an outcome of the schooling process. (Sudarshan, 1999).

Seen in this sight, non-formal education is not an alternative, it is a necessity and is increasingly being seen in its totality. It is nothing but education imparted through non-formal means and agencies. (Singh, 1994). Non-formal education is about acknowledging the importance of education, learning and training which takes place outside recognized educational institutions. (Tight, 1996).

Education liberates one from ignorance, ignorance is directly related to illiteracy and illiteracy breeds poverty. (Khan). It is in this context of our economic, political and social goals of development that we consider the legitimate role of education, and more recently, the non-formal education. Thus, non-formal education includes providing awareness and development of certain understanding and learning in the community which would help them to survive in a better way. These developmental concepts are referred to as Life Skills Education. (Government of India, 2001)

The adult education movement has always laid emphasis on women's education as women are the best agent of social change (Khan); their active participation in development programs not only ensures their success and improve their socio – economic status but also promotes family planning, child welfare and elementary education. Thus there is a need for non-formal education for women and out of school adolescent girls. (Pillai, 1995).

Many such initiatives have been taken by our government through the universalization of the primary education and various programs being run at different levels in the country. The voluntary sector has played a significant role in the socio-economic development of the people especially the vulnerable sections of the society. However, follow up and documentation of the effects and impacts of such interventions are not very commonly found, which is necessary in order to further enhance the efficiency of a program or project.

The present study was conducted so as to know the impact of the Balika Shivar Program being run by the Urmul Setu in remote areas of the western Rajasthan. It provides an understanding as to what were the reasons that led to the girls participation in the shivirs, what was the effect of their participation and would provide valuable insights about this motivating approach to the non formal education of girls being attempted by Urmul. It would further guide us as to how the various components of this program can be incorporated in other educational projects.

### **Objectives of the Study**

#### General Objective :

To study the impact of the Balika Shivar program on the lives of the girls who participated in it.

Specific Objectives:

- To study the profiles of the girls who have participated in the Balika Shivar program.
- To understand the perception of the participants regarding the different components of the program.
- To study the effects the girls perceive because of their participation in the Balika Shivar.
- To compare the development of life skills in the girls who attended the program with those who did not.

**Operational Definitions**

**Formal education:** the hierarchically structured, chronologically graded 'education system', running from primary school through the university and including, in addition to general academic studies, a variety of specialized programs and institutions for full-time technical and professional training.

**Informal education:** the truly lifelong process whereby every individual acquires attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from daily experience and the educative influences and resources in his or her environment - from family and neighbours, from work and play, from the market place, the library and the mass media.

**Non-formal education:** any organized educational activity outside the established formal system - whether operating separately or as an important feature of some broader activity - that is intended to serve identifiable learning clienteles and learning objectives.

**Life Long education:** any planned series of incidents, having a humanistic basis, directed towards the participants learning and understanding that may



occur at any stage in the lifespan. It is the integral part of the scheme of development of the individual, of the society or the nation.

**Life Skills:** are the abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enables individual to deal effectively with the demand and changes of everyday life (WHO). Life skills are essentially those abilities that help to promote mental well being and competency of young people as they face the realities of life. There are three broad areas of life skills viz. Thinking, Social, and Negotiating skills.

## CHAPTER - 2

### METHODOLOGY

The present study, “ MAPPING RURAL ADOLESCENT GIRLS’ PARTICIPATION IN RESIDENTIAL NON-FORMAL EDUCATION PROGRAM – A STUDY IN LUNKARANSAR BLOCK, RAJASTHAN ” was undertaken with the objective to study the dimensions of rural adolescent girl’s participation in the Balika Shivar Program. The present study focused on providing qualitative insights about the girls who participated in this program understand the reasons which influenced the girls’ participation in these camps, and how the camp has effected the lives of the girls who participated in it.

The methodology for the study will be discussed under the following headings :

#### 2.1 Locale of the study

#### 2.2 Sample

- a) Sample Selection
- b) Sample Size
- c) Sample Technique

#### 2.3 Tools for data collection

- a) Selection of the Tools
- b) Development of the tools

#### 2.4 Method of data collection

## 2.1 LOCALE OF THE STUDY

The study was carried out in the Lunkaransar Block of Bikaner District in Western Rajasthan. The area being one of the remote rural regions in the country has had a very superficial exposure to the programs of education being run by the government. The schools in the villages are either not present at all and where they are present their provisions for education mostly remains inadequate. Moreover the ratio of girls attending the schools is very low as compared to boys (Urmul, 2000). Also, even today the state remains feudalistic and has a culture of male domination.



Fig. 2.1 Rajasthan State

The villages of Lunkaransar block are agriculture based, some of which, are irrigated and others were rain-fed. The population of the villages varies from 500 to 2,000. The literacy rate remains quiet low. The economic status of the villages is mostly low and a famine is being witnessed since past four years which has further worsened

the condition in the area. Apart from agriculture people practice animal rearing, mining and some of them own shops and are employed as drivers. (Urmul, 2001).

The Balika Shivar Program was an innovative approach to non-formal education that was adopted By Urmul Trust in various blocks of Bikaner district. Girls from this region have been participating in the Balika Shivar Program, being run by Urmul Setu, one of the branches of the organization, Urmul Trust.



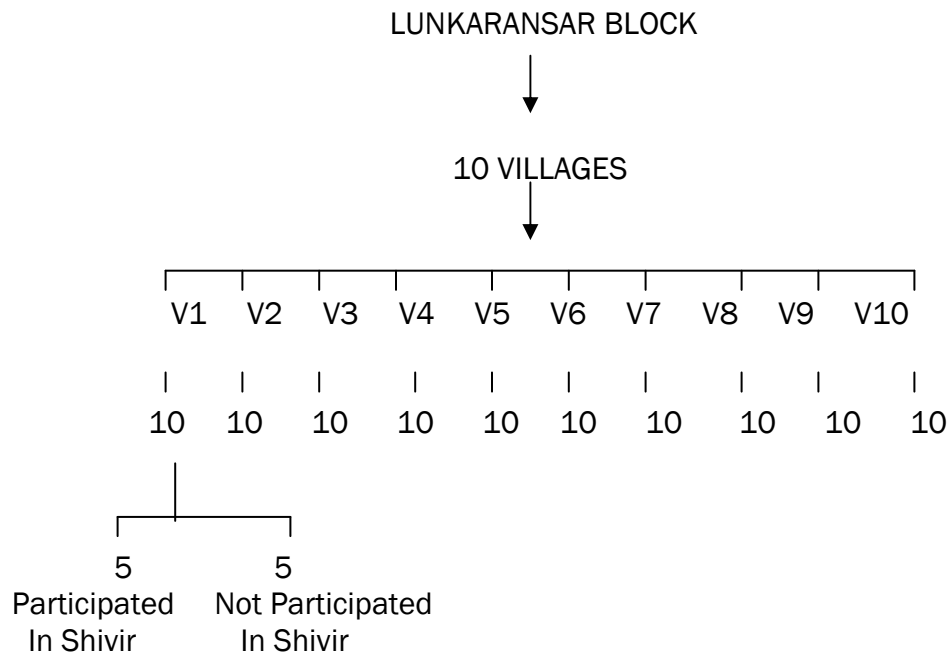
Fig. 2.2 Map of Bikaner District in Rajasthan

## 2.2 SAMPLE

### 2.2a SAMPLE SELECTION

For the selection of sample a list was procured, from the organization, of the villages from where the girls had participated in the Balika Shivar Program. From a total of 120 villages, 10 villages were purposively selected. Logistical aspects and availability of the girls who had participated in the shivar in the villages primarily guided the selection of the villages.

Fig. 2.1 Sample selection from the locale



### 2.2b SAMPLE SIZE

A sample of ten girls were chosen from each village, five of which had attended the camp and five who had not attended the camp. Thus, there was a total sample of 100 girls from the ten villages, 50 who had participated and 50 who had not participated in the shivar.

Purposive sampling was used for the 50 girls who had not attended the camp. The girls selected were either illiterate / drop outs of the formal education system at primary level and were between in the age group of 12 - 16 years. The girls who were available in the village at the time of data collection were selected.

Table : 2.1  
Sample of the Study

VILLAGES	Total Girls who participated in the camp	SAMPLE		TOTAL SAMPLE
		<i>Girls who participated in the Camp</i>	<i>Girls who did not participate</i>	
4SLD	7	5	5	10
Khari	38	5	5	10
Nakodesar	28	5	5	10
Dudewaali	11	5	5	10
Rajasar	15	5	5	10
Sodhwaali	8	5	5	10
Rambagh	20	5	5	10
Sabania	14	5	5	10
Dulmera	6	5	5	10
Binjharwaali	7	5	5	10
Total		50	50	<b>100</b>

Sampling of the girls who had attended the shivir was done according to the availability of the girls. Only those girls were selected from the list of the girls of Balika Shivir who were still living in the village at the time of data collection. Some of the girls had either left the village because they had got married and some others had migrated to some other village with their family. From those present the girls were randomly selected.

## 2.3 TOOLS FOR DATA COLLECTION

### 2.3.1 SELECTION OF THE TOOLS

In order to provide qualitative multifaceted understanding of the girls participation in the camp, the following tools were selected.

- A detailed semi structured ***interview schedule***, comprising of both open and close-ended questions, was used to collect the data from the girls who had participated in the Balika Shivar. In order to know the profiles of the girls in details and to understand their perception about the Shivar and its effect in their lives, interviewing was the better method for eliciting the information.
- A ***Life Skill Assessment Inventory*** was used for the collection of data from all the girls regarding their life skills development. Assessing the life skills of both the groups of girls enabled comparison of the same in the girls who had attended the Shivar and those who had not. The inventory had been specially designed by the UNFPA for the assessment of Life Skills.
- ***Focussed Group discussions*** were held with the girls of both the groups together in all the villages to further understand the effectiveness of the program as perceived by them.
- ***Informal Discussions*** were held with Urmul Staff and volunteers to understand the genesis and various facets of the Balika Shivar Program.
- ***Secondary Sources of information.*** Reports, documents, data basis of the organization were accessed to gather secondary information about the program.

### 2.3.2 DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOOLS

#### ***Pilot Study*** –

A pilot study was conducted in one of the villages, Sabania, located in Arjunsar cluster of the Lunkaransar block in October, 2001. It helped in the focussing the development of the qualitative tools. Pre-testing of all the tools viz. the interview schedule, the life skill assessment inventory and the focussed group discussion, was

carried out. On the basis of pre-testing, the tools were modified and a sampling framework was worked out.

### **2.3.2 a Interview Schedule -**

The interview schedule was evolved based on the Pilot Study that was carried out in the Village Sabania of Arjunsar Cluster, Lunkaransar Block before the formation of the tools. This short study included:

- interviewing the girls who had participated in the Balika Shivar
- discussions with the village level workers engaged with the program
- discussions with the people who organize the program

so as to know the various aspects that need to be studied for the research. Apart from this review of literature especially from the records in the Urmul helped a great deal in understanding the socio, economic and psychological conditions prevalent in the area where the research was carried out.

The interview schedule was aimed to know the profiles of the girls who participated in the Balika Shivar and to understand the problems faced as well as the impact of the program that they perceive. It was divided under six main sections :

- ✓ Profile of the girls and their family
  - Name
  - Age – at present; at the time of camp
  - Camp attended
  - Educational status
  - Marital status – at present; at the time of camp
  - Village
  - Caste
  - Family profile
- ✓ Factors that influenced their decision to join the camp
- ✓ Problems faced in the family and community
- ✓ The camp program and curriculum



- ✓ How the camp has been beneficial – perception of the beneficiaries
- ✓ Further education

This could generate the both qualitative as well as quantitative data required from the girls who had participated in the camp.

**2.3.2 b Life Skills Assessment Inventory –**

The tool used to assess the development of the Life Skills in the girls was the “Life Skills Assessment Inventory”. The various indicators for ‘life skills’ have been developed by UNFPA which has been expanded into an inventory and translated into Hindi by Urvi Vikram Charitable Trust (UVCT) in a project commissioned by UNFPA.

Table 2.2 : Life skills and the Abilities indicating them

LIFE SKILLS	ABILITIES
Thinking skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Critical thinking</li> <li>▪ Planning</li> </ul>
Social skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Self reflection</li> <li>▪ Working with others</li> <li>▪ Communicating effectively</li> </ul>
Negotiating skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Negotiating with self</li> <li>▪ Negotiating with others</li> </ul>

The inventory assesses three life skills viz. Thinking skills, Social skills and Negotiating skills. All the three skills were probed by various aspects (shown in the Table 2.2 - Life Skills and the Abilities indicating them), which are the abilities that

indicate the respective life skill. Each aspect has two cues and the respondents were required to answer on a five point scale.

In the original inventory some aspects had one cue, and others had two cues. Also, the Hindi translation was not complete. Hence, its translation and some required changes were done with the help of experts –

- Dr. Mridula Seth, UNFPA
- Staff members, UVCT
- Lady Irwin Faculty

Each aspect was thus, uniformly probed by two cue questions. These cues were decided upon in order to enable the respondent to understand the probe situations and answer effectively. Moreover, this gave the inventory a standard format. The Hindi translation was also completed.

Validating the Inventory -

- For finding the validity of the Life Skill Assessment Inventory a study was carried out in the village Pahari, a resettlement colony near Mehrauli, Delhi on a sample of ten girls between the age group of 12-18 years. The people in the area are from different socio-economic and geographical backgrounds, and one of the communities belongs to Rajasthan, thus providing a similar background as of the original sample of the study.
- The sample of ten was selected according to the availability of the girls. These girls were not the part of the actual sample for the study.
- The Life Skill Assessment Inventory was validated using the Test-Retest method. It was assessed with a gap of 7 days. Pearson's co-relation (r), between the two scores obtained was calculated. The value of the co-relation calculated was  $r = 0.67$ , showing that there was high co-relation in the two sets of scores obtained.

- The girls/women could understand and respond to the Inventory quite well and some of the changes needed were then made in the questions. A few terminologies and the language of some cues was simplified.

### **2.3.2 c Focussed Group Discussions**

A Schedule for focussed group discussions was prepared. It included questions for both the groups of girls i.e. the girls who participated in the Balika Shivar as well as those who did not.

The FGDs sought to probe the following from the girls :

- ✓ Aspects of education for girls
- ✓ Effects of girls' participation in the shivar
- ✓ Future aspirations of the girls

## **2.4 DATA COLLECTION**

The data for the study was collected in the months of December,2001 – January,2002 with the help of all the three tools. Apart from the primary data, secondary data was also collected from the records of the organization and through discussions with the workers of the organization.

The Rapport formation was done with the help of the organization's workers present in the villages, who also assisted in communicating with the people. The Pilot study enabled the understanding of organizational structure and develop a rapport with the organization staff.

For data collection the girls were individually interviewed and administered the Life Skill Assessment Inventory. In case of girls who had not participated in the shivar, only the Inventory was administered. Focussed group discussions were held in all the villages.

- Interview schedule – the interviews were conducted in the homes of most of the respondents, and for some girls it was conducted in the schools where they were studying. Rapport formation was done with the help of the workers of the organization who have been working in each village for past few years. The responses were recorded through audio tapes as well as were written, especially in case of close-ended questions.
- Life skills assessment inventory – the respondents of both the groups were administered this test and were made to rate the questions on a five point scale. The girls were made to understand the concept of rating scale using the Seed technique of PRA.

Table 2.3 : RATING SCALE :

Score	Response
1	Incorrect
2	Sometimes true
3	Not sure
4	Almost true
5	Yes

- Focussed group discussions – FGDs were held with a group of 6 – 8 girls from each village including the girls who participated in the shivir as well as the girls who did not. The duration of the discussions ranged from 40 minutes to one hour. In most of the cases either the worker from Urmul, or a teacher of the local school or any other local leader assisted in carrying out the FGD. The discussions were recorded with the help of audio tapes.

## **2.5 ANALYSIS OF THE DATA**

In accordance with the kind of information and data collected, the data was subjected to a quantitative as well as qualitative analysis. In case of the Life Skill Assessment Inventory each question was given a score on the rating scale of 1 to 5. The scores obtained from the 100 respondents were tabulated and coded. Statistical analysis, T-test, was used to find out the difference in the life skill development between the girls who participated in the Balika Shivar and those who did not.

Data collected from the interview schedule was analyzed qualitatively for the open ended questions and quantitatively for the close ended ones. Thus a clear picture could be drawn about the conditions in which the girls joined the camp and the impact of the same on their lives.

## **2.6 CONSTRAINTS OF THE STUDY**

- Due to the time constraint only fifty girls out of about 500 girls who had participated in the camp could be interviewed.
- The distance of the locale from Delhi restricted the to and fro movement and hence the data had to be collected in a specific short period of time.
- Some of the girls had got married and moved outside the village, hence, could not be contacted.
- A large sample could not be drawn due to logistical problems as villages were spread out and most villagers were staying in their fields or 'Dhanis', making their access even more difficult.

## CHAPTER - 3

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study entitled 'MAPPING THE RURAL ADOLESCENT GIRLS' PARTICIPATION IN RESIDENTIAL NON-FORMAL EDUCATION PROGRAM - A STUDY IN LUNKARANSAR BLOCK, RAJASTHAN' was undertaken with the objective to study the dimensions of rural adolescent girl's participation in the Balika Shivar Program and its influence on their lives.

A sample of 100 girls (50 who had attended and 50 who had not attended the shivar) was taken from ten villages from where the girls had participated in the program. The data was collected using the interview schedule, life skill assessment inventory and focussed group discussions. The data was tabulated under the following headings :

- 3.1 Profile of the girls who attended the shivar
- 3.2 Decision to participate in the shivar
- 3.3 The Shivar Program
- 3.4 Effects of participation in the shivar

#### 3.1. PROFILE OF THE GIRLS WHO ATTENDED THE SHIVIR

The profile of the girls who had participated in the shivirs was obtained. Understanding their socio-economic background provided insights about their realities. It includes the age of the girls at present and when they attended the shivar, their marital status at present and when they attended the camp, the class they completed, their educational status, the caste and the village to which they belong.

The reasons the girls were not able to attend a school or become educated were also profiled. Together they provided multifaceted insights into the realities of the girls' lives.

### 3.1.1 SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

#### 3.1.1 a Age -

The Balika Shivirs are organized for girls between the ages of 10 to 18 years. Younger girls are not included as they are expected to be part of the formal school program. Older girls who are willing to participate are included.

Table 3.1 : Frequency of respondents in various age groups.

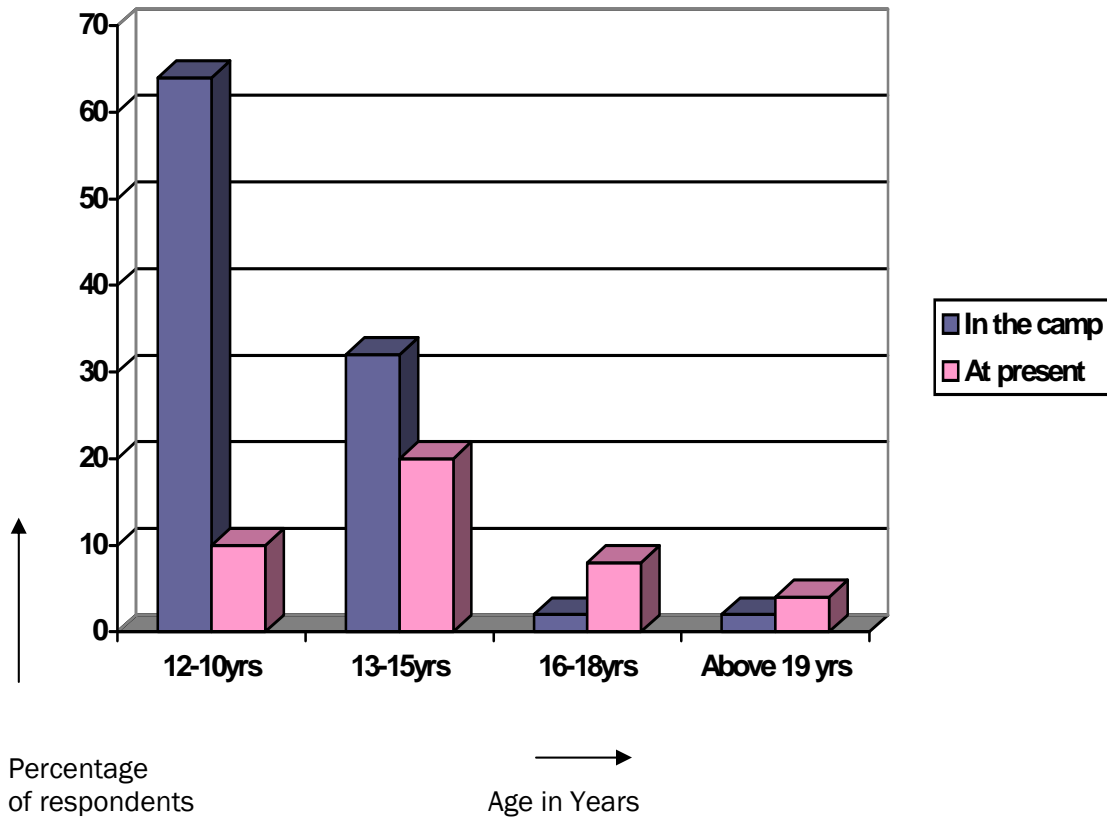
N = 50

Age (in years)	Frequency	
	In the Camp	At Present
10 - 12	32 (64%)	10 (20%)
13 - 15	16 (32%)	34 (68%)
16 - 18	1 (2%)	4 (8%)
19 & above	1 (2%)	2 (4%)
Total	50	50

\*( *Italic* indicates % of N = 50 )

Most of the girls included in the study, who participated in the shivir, were in the age group of 10 - 12 years and rest of them were between 13 -15 years of age. This is probably because the people in the village are hesitant to send their older daughters out of the village. Moreover the girls get married at an early age and usually leave for their in-laws homes soon after puberty, hence cannot join the shivir.

Fig. 3.1 FREQUENCY OF RESPONDENTS IN VARIOUS AGE GROUPS



As per secondary data sources the average age of girls attending the shivirs have gone up. Initially only very young girls were attending the camp for young girls the camp is an opportunity to perhaps rejoin the formal system in education. While, for older girls it is perhaps the last chance to be exposed to a formalized learning opportunity before they are married and get totally embroiled in the issues of adulthood. The average age of the respondents of the study was 12 years, whereas as per the secondary sources the average age of all the girls who have participated in all the shivirs held was 14 years (Urmul, 2001). Most of the respondents for the study were in the younger age group, probably because the



girls have got married and had left their parent's village, hence were unavailable for the study.

### 3.1.1 b Occupation Of The Head Of The Family –

According to the secondary sources of information, the rural economy of the area is largely pastoral, the majority of the communities practicing some form of semi-nomadic animal husbandry and often relying on the subsistence cultivation of a *kharif* crop of inferior cereals and millet. There are very few artisans practicing traditional arts in the region as compared to other parts of Rajasthan.

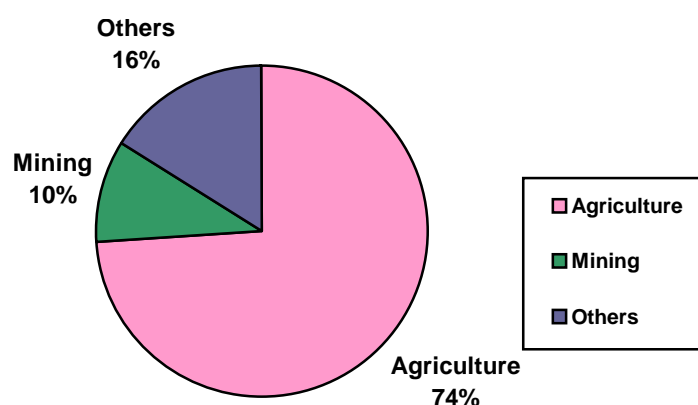
Table 3.2 : Frequency of respondents for the occupation of the head of their family N= 50

	Occupation of the head of the family	Responses
1	Agriculture	37 74%
2	Mining	5 10%
3	Others	8 16%
	Total	50

\* ( *Italic* indicates % of N = 50 )

It was found that majority of the families were engaged in agriculture as their main occupation along with cattle rearing or animal husbandry. 10% of the families i.e. those from the Lunkaransar cluster were engaged in mining of red stone. Rest 16% are either self employed or are working as drivers of heavy vehicles.

**Fig. 3.2 FREQUENCY OF RESPONDENTS FOR THE OCCUPATION OF THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY**



The respondents mostly belonged to families that were below the poverty line. Their family income hardly goes beyond Rs.25,000 per annum, and for some it was as low as Rs.5000 per annum. The famine that is being witnessed in the region for past four years has made the conditions even worse.

### 3.1.1 c Family Size -

The families in these remote rural areas are generally large, according to the secondary data sources. The people hardly practice family planning and believe in having more number of children so that they can have more earning hands. Moreover, the desire for having a male child only increases the number further.

Most of the respondents i.e. 48%, belonged to medium sized families and another 42% to large sized families. Very few i.e. only 10% belonged to small families with less than five members.

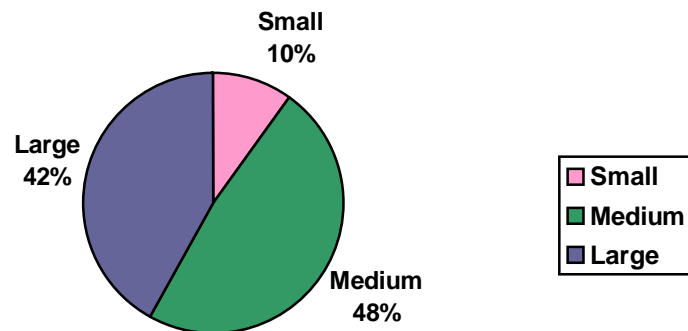
Table 3.3 : Frequency of respondents for the their family size

N= 50

	Family size	Responses
1	Small (<5 members )	5 10%
2	Medium (5 - 8 members )	24 48%
3	Large ( >8 members )	21 42%
	Total	50

\* ( *Italic indicates % of N = 50* )

Fig. 3.3 FREQUENCY OF RESPONDENTS FOR THEIR FAMILY SIZE



#### 3.1.1 d Marital Status Of The Girls -

In all the shivirs, it was seen that majority of the girls who participated in the program were unmarried (Urmul, 2001). Girls, when married, are even more restricted to go out of the houses. Even the married girls still living with their parents, i.e. for whom the ceremony of 'gauna' has not been performed, the decisions about them and their lives are majorly governed by the in-law family.

Education takes a further backseat in their lives as they prepare for their married life in the duty is to look after the chores of the house and the field.

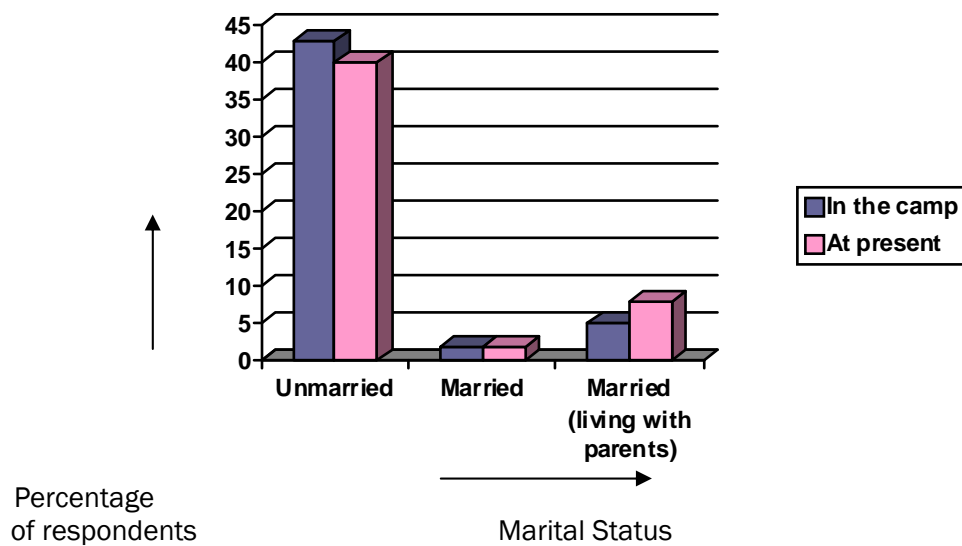
Table 3.4 : Frequency of respondents for their marital status

N = 50

Marital Status	Frequency	
	In the Camp	At Present
Unmarried	43 (86%)	40 (80%)
Married	2 (4%)	2 (4%)
Married (living with parents)	5 (10%)	8 (16%)
Total	50	50

\*( *Italic indicates % of N = 50* )

Fig. 3.4 FREQUENCY OF RESPONDENTS FOR THEIR MARITAL STATUS



It was found that mostly those girls participated in the shivir who were not married, 86% of the study sample were unmarried when they joined the shivir. Only 4% of the girls were married and 10% were married but were living with their parents. When the study was conducted, only 6% of the girls who were earlier single had been married but were still living with their parents.

### 3.1.1e Education -

The level of education the girls obtained at the shivir as well as how far they were subsequently able to further their education after the shivir. It is another important aspect as this would indicate the educational status of the girls, and let us know whether participation in the shivir could help them to further continue their education.

*Class completed in the camp* - In the shivirs most of the girls could complete their primary education, but there were some who could complete only one or two years of primary schooling. The are designed so as to suit the aptitude of different girls. Those who could not complete a class with other girls were not disqualified, but were made to continue as per their caliber.

Table 3.5 : Level of education achieved in the shivir

N = 50

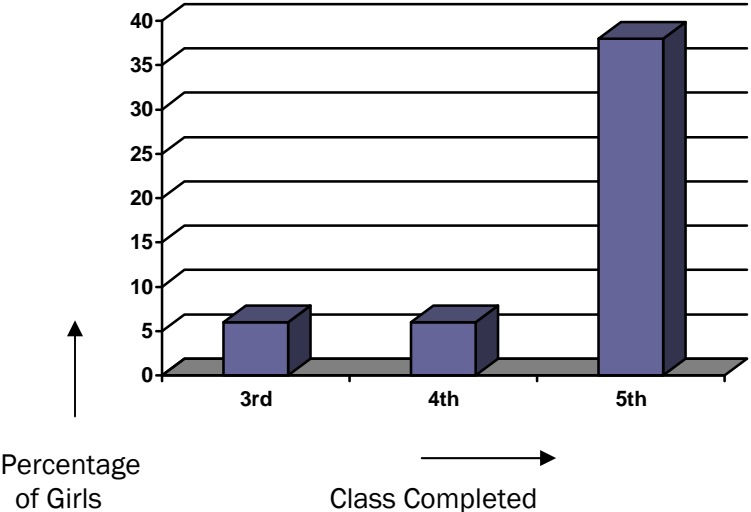
Class Completed	Frequency
Fifth	38 (76%)
Fourth	6 (12%)
Third	6 (12%)
Total	50

\* ( *Italic* indicates % of N = 50 )

Of the girls studied who had attended the shivir majority i.e. 76% could complete class five in the camps. Only 6% of the girls completed class four and another 6% could complete up to class three.

As per the secondary sources of information, in the earlier shivirs, more girls could not complete Class V, but in later shivirs their percentage reduced. (Urmul, 2001). In the first shivir an additional camp was organized after the main camp for those girls who could not complete their primary education. But, for the later camps this provision could not be provided. Clearly, flexibilities are very important in any program of education for rural girls. When the program had flexibility for appearing for exams, it enabled more girls to attain formal education milestones.

**Fig. 3.5 LEVEL OF EDUCATION ACHIEVED IN THE SHVIVIR**



*Further education obtained* – after attending the shivir some girls furthered their education. The girls could join their village school after the shivir, which

they would not have been able to do without the opportunity of participating in the shivir.

Table 3.6 : Further education obtained

N=50

No	Yes
26 52%	24 49%

\*( *Italic indicates % of N = 50* )

Table 3.7 : Present education of the girls who attended the shivir

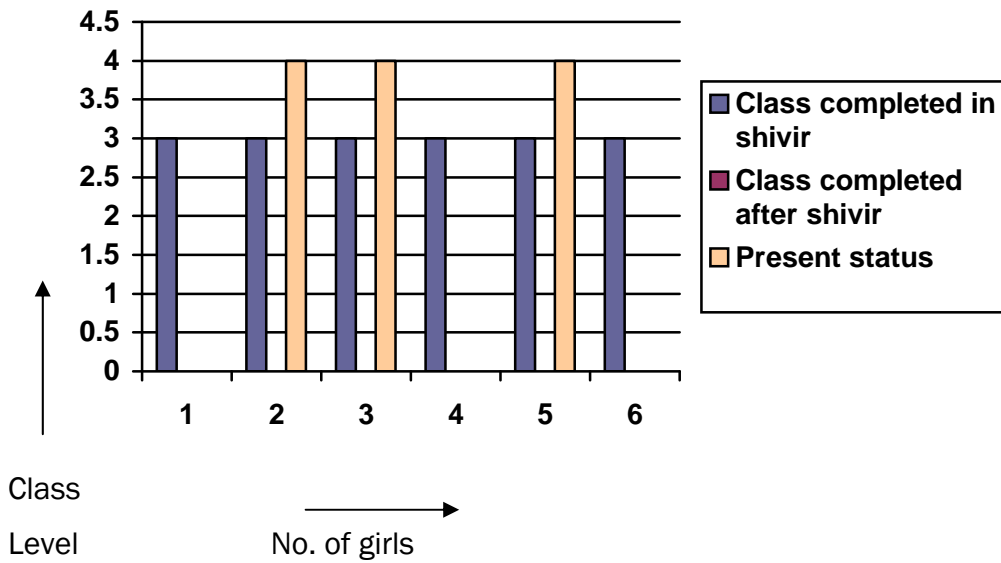
N = 50

Class completed after the shivir	Frequency of girls
Completed 4 <sup>th</sup>	1 2%
Completed 5 <sup>th</sup>	9 18%
Completed 6 <sup>th</sup>	6 12%
Completed 7 <sup>th</sup>	2 4%
Completed 8 <sup>th</sup>	2 4%
Total	20 40%

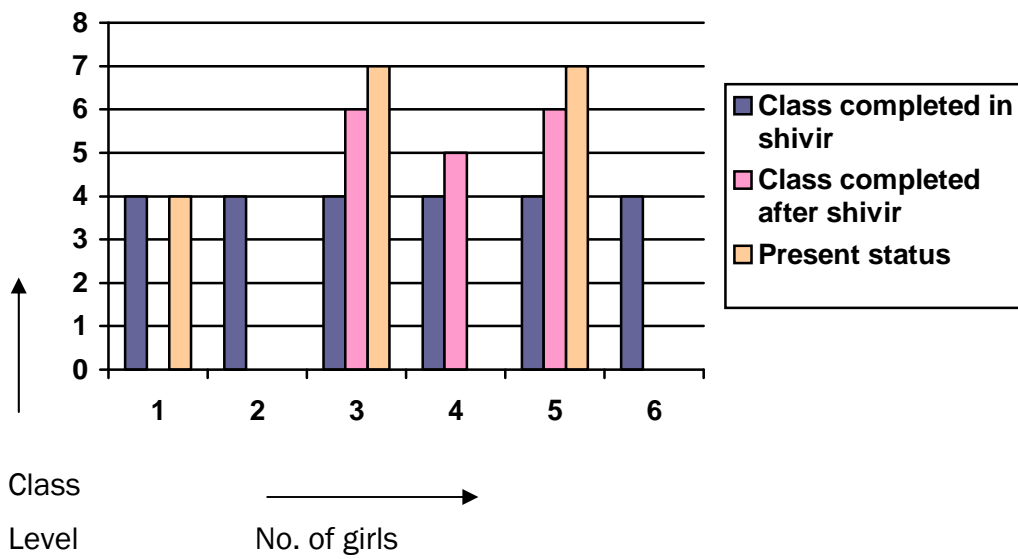
\*( *Italic indicates % of N = 50* )

Of the study sample 52% did not further their education while 49% did. Out of these 49%, 40% girls have completed their education up to some class and rest joined the have the school and will appear for their exams in March, 2002. Of the girls who studied further, 38% are presently attending formal schools to further their education. More girls from the later shivirs, as compared to the earlier ones, joined the formal education system, so as to continue their education. (Urmul, 2001).

**Fig. 3.6 EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF GIRLS WHO COMPLETED CLASS  
3<sup>rd</sup> IN THE SHIVIR**



**Fig. 3.7 EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF GIRLS WHO COMPLETED CLASS  
4<sup>th</sup> IN THE SHIVIR**

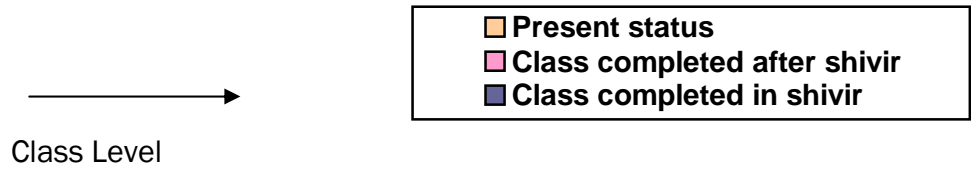
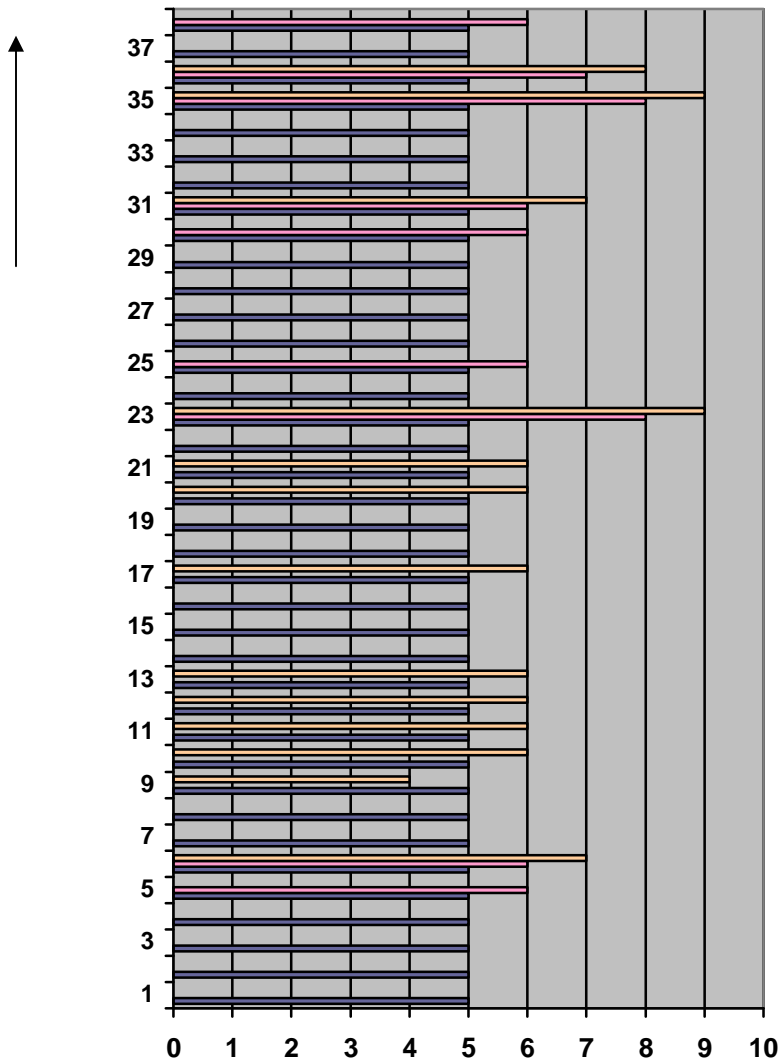




**Fig. 3.8 EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF GIRLS WHO COMPLETED CLASS**

**5<sup>th</sup> IN THE SHIVIR**

No. of girls



### 3.1.1f Caste -

In the earlier shivirs, it was the girls from the lower castes of the villages who mostly joined the shivir. Over the years it was seen that, the number of girls from the higher castes increased. (Urmul, 2001).

Majority of the respondents belonged to the lower castes, i.e. Meghwaal (44%), Jaat (26%) and Nayak (24%). Only 3% of the respondents belonged to other castes like Brahmin, Muslim and Sultar. This was because girls from lower castes get lesser opportunities to procure any formal education due to social and economic reasons. Moreover, Urmul trust is working mainly with those people in the villages who are below poverty line.

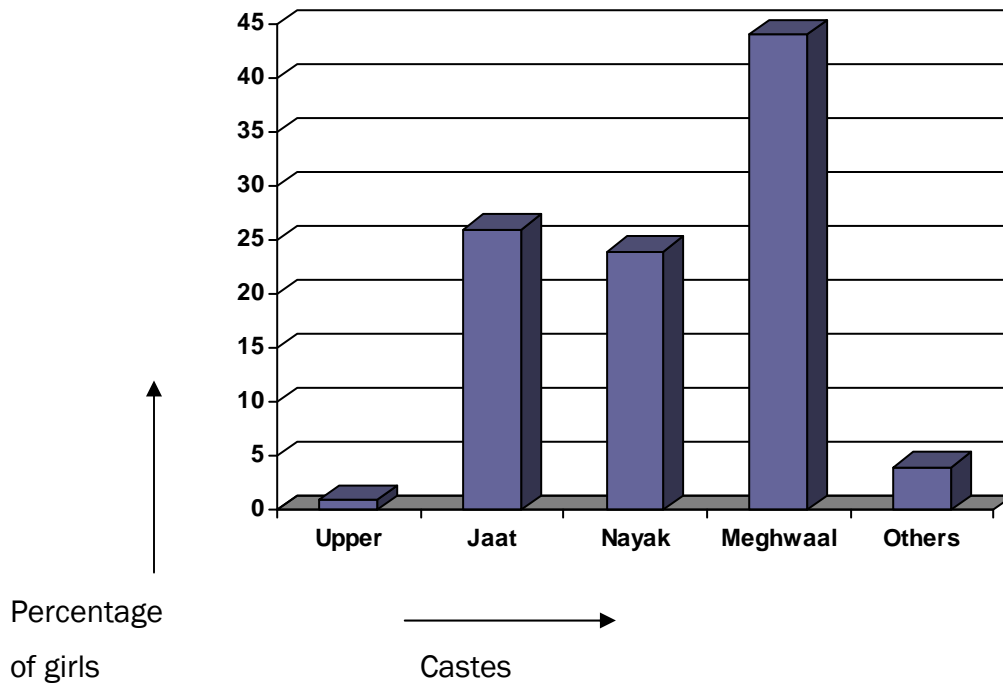
Table 3.8 : Frequency for Castes to which the respondents belonged

N = 50

Caste	Frequency
Upper caste	
- Brahmin	1 (2%)
Lower caste	
- Jaat	13 (26%)
- Nayak	12 (24%)
- Meghwaal	22 (44%)
Others	
- Sultar	1 (2%)
- Muslim	1 (2%)

\* ( *Italic* indicates % of N = 50 )

Fig. 3.9 FREQUENCY FOR CASTES TO WHICH THE RESPONDENTS BELONGED



### 3.1.1g Village -

The villages of the area are backward with most of the people living below the poverty line. The literacy rates are abysmally low especially for women. There is acute water scarcity, many villages and settlements rely on wells or water supply from the Indira Gandhi Canal which is stored in small 'dhiggis' in their homes. The houses are generally made of mud, with few villages as exceptions which have 'pucca' houses.

Table 3.9 : Villages to which the respondents belonged

N = 50

Villages	Total girls	C I	C II	C III	C IV
4SLD	7		3	1	1
Nakodesar	28	1		1	3
Rambagh	20	2		1	2
Doodewaali	11	3	1		1
Dulmera	6	3		1	1
Khari	38	1			4
Sodhwaali	8	2			3
Rajasar	15		1		4
Binjharwaali	7				5
Sabania	14	3		1	1

Most of the villages have a school up to primary level and some even have up to middle level. There are health centres in the villages or in the nearby villages, either being run by the government or by trained personnel from Urmul. Occupational diseases such as Tuberculosis and Silicosis are fairly endemic. The villages have unstable political climate and the people lack access to information.

- 4SLD - This village is located in one of the most remote areas of Lunkaransar block, with no electricity or telephone connection. The houses in the village are located in the fields itself (*dhanis*) and there is only one school being run by the government. The school is up to primary level with two male teachers as the teaching staff. The literacy rate of the village is very low. The people showed very little interest for the shivir in the beginning, but now their response is getting

- better. Moreover, many girls receive education up to primary level in the local school itself.
- Nakodesar – It is one of the older villages of the Urmul. The work in the village had to be started again a couple of years back because of some political problems which led to a gap of few years. The school in the villages is up to middle class but is not functioning properly as the teacher of the school is more of a political leader in the village. Most of the villagers are frustrated from the teacher and are not interested in education of their children.
  - Rambagh – The village is located in a more easily accessible area as compared to other villages and has the electricity connection. The school in the village is up to middle level and is functioning well with three teachers. Both boys and girls are almost equally enrolled in the school. Due to military camps, which are stationed for six months in a year, people fear sending their children especially girls out of the house. The response of people to the shivir has increased over the time.
  - Doodewaali – This is another village that falls in the military area, so people have a fear in moving out of their houses. People of the village are mostly Jats and there is large prevalence of political rivalries in the area. Due to this the response to the shivir was not as good as in other villages. A primary school being run by the government is situated in the village and for further education children have to go to a school which is 4 km. away from the village.
  - Dulmera – The village has both scattered houses as well as houses that are situated close by. Unlike other villages where people have agriculture as their main occupation, the people of this village are engaged or employed in red stone mining. Thus the mortality rate for men is quite high in the village. A school up to 8<sup>th</sup> class is being run by the government and has both male as well as female teachers. The number of girls being sent to the shivir has increased recently.
  - Khari – This village is one of the older villages of Urmul. The response for Balika Shivir was very high from Khari because many Sangathans that were working in the village could help to convince the villagers to send their daughters to the

- shivir. A government run primary school with three male teachers is being run though not up to the satisfaction level of the villagers.
- Sodhwaali – This is not a very old village adopted by Urmul. The main occupation of the people is agriculture and cattle rearing and about 32 - 35% of the houses have electricity. There is a primary school being run by the Shikshakarmi program with four teachers and the government is running a school from 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> class with 6 teachers. The success of Balika Shivirs has encouraged the people to send more girls from their village.
  - Rajasar – It is located very near to the border and the houses in the village are scattered. People of the village belong to mostly higher castes like Rajput, Jat, Brahmin but there are Muslims and some families belonging to lower castes too. The school in the village is up to 8<sup>th</sup> class and is being run by the government with two female teachers. The response for the shivir has increased recently.
  - Sabania – It is a very backward village with people belonging to lower castes and have a very low literacy rate. There is a government school up to primary level and a private school up to 9<sup>th</sup> class. It is another one of the oldest villages adopted by Urmul. The response for the shivir has been good as people are willing to get their daughters educated, especially for those who could not join the school of their village.
  - Binjharwaali – It is one of the recently adopted villages of Urmul. The people of the village have low economic status and are mostly illiterate. The village has a health centre being run by the government. Most of the people were not interested in sending their daughters to the shivir. It was only in the later shivirs that the response has increased.

### 3.2 BARRIERS TO GIRLS' EDUCATION

The various barriers, the girls perceived, that hinder their further education were studied. These were classified broadly as economic, social and the structural barriers.

Table 3.10 : Barriers perceived by the girls to their education

N = 50

	Barriers Perceived by the girls	Responses
1	Economic Barriers	26 52%
2	Social Barriers	32 68%
3	Structural Barriers	24 48%

\*( *Italic indicates % of N = 50* )

A. Economic Barriers - economic condition of the family plays an important role in development of the child, be it a girl or a boy. It is seen that people who have low economic status have other preferences over education, as their basic human needs have to be satisfied before the social needs.

Majority of the respondents were from a lower caste having low economic status, thus, poverty was one of the primary barriers perceived to their education. Moreover, most of the families were big, having more than 4 children, due to which they are unable to afford education for all especially girls.

B. Social Barriers - majority of the girls responded social barriers as their hindrance to education. These barriers can be from within the family or from the community. Family is the most important determinant for the girls' education, as they are the ones who would take all the decisions for her future. Society is another important factor that determines the behavior and decisions of any family. Many parents do

not send their girls to school because of social insecurity. Some of the social barriers that restrict the girls from joining formal education system are:

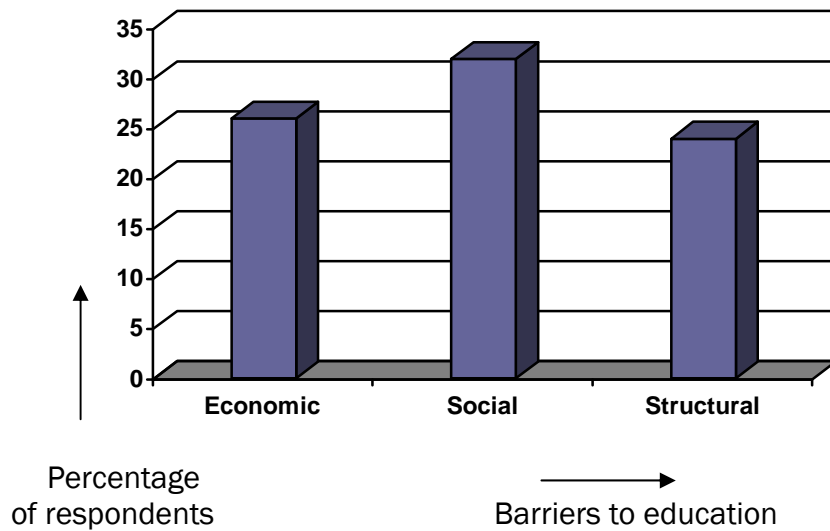
- Household and field work – the girls have to take care of the household as well as the field work and thus do not get time to join the school.
- Ignorance – parents / family is either ignorant or are unaware of the importance of education for their children. Thus, they do not send their daughters to school.
- Gender issue – due to discrimination on the basis of gender, most of the girls are unable to attend the school. They face gender inequality in the family as well as in the community and hence feel that they are inferior to boys and cannot pursue education.
- Age of the girls – for many girls it was their age that was restricting them to join any education system. Their families as well as the community were against their going out of the house for the purpose of education, that merely has any significance in their lives.

C. Structural Barriers – other than economic and social barriers there were some structural barriers within the educational system which detained the girls from the schools. These are:

- Limited schools – all the villages do not have a school in the village or any where near to the village, because of which parents cannot send their daughters to any school even if they are willing to do so.
- The teaching staff – many girls responded that the teachers at the school were either not good enough or were too irregular to school. Many girls fear that the teachers would beat them at the school.
- Timings of the school – for most of the girls the timings of the school did not suit them as they have to perform many house and field related tasks before going to the school. Also, the seasonal variation of their field work does not allow them to be regular at the school.



**Fig 3.10 BARRIERS PERCEIVED BY THE GIRLS TO THEIR EDUCATION**



Thus, it was seen that there were many barriers that were restricting the girls from joining the formal education system. Any program of education of girls form the larger realities within which it must operate. How a program interfaces with these issues will largely determine rural girls' participation in any education program.

### 3.2.1 DECISION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE SHIVIR

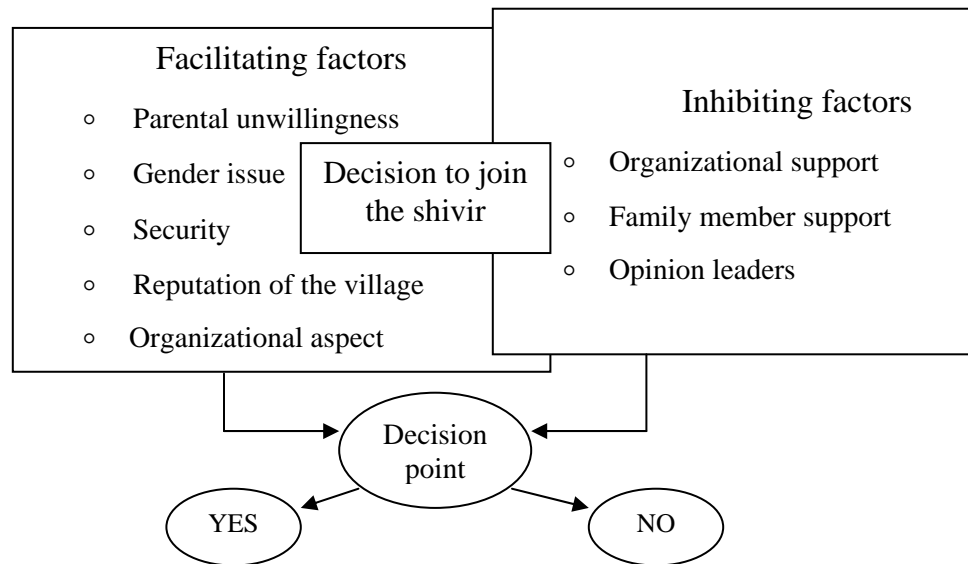
Rajasthan state has one of the lowest female literacy rates in the country (44.34%, as per Census, 2001). Little importance is given to the education of girls (Urmul, 2001) and the status of girl child remains low. Understanding the factors that led to the girls, from an economically and socially backward area, participate in a residential six-month program of education provided valuable insights.

The decision of the girls' participation in the shivir was the one that was largely made by their family members. The family is the most important element in one's life that

influences our decision making to a very large extent. In the context of the present study, a girl from a community of such a remote rural area usually makes few decisions on her own. It is her family who decides most things about her life and hence also, whether she would attend the camp or not.

The decision of the families was found to be influenced by two kinds of factors. These were the negative or the Inhibiting factors and the positive or the Facilitating factors. The Inhibiting factors were the ones that restricted the girls' participation in the shivir acting as deterrents. The positive factors, on the other hand, were those that encouraged and facilitated girls' participation in the shivir. Both these factors had a locus of origin either from within the family or from outside the family and were found to co-exist in any family.

Fig. 3a Factors affecting the decision to participate in the shivir



3.2.1a **Inhibiting Factors :**

These are the negative factors that acted as obstacles and influenced the decision for the girls to join the shivir. These were the constraints or the hindrances that the girls faced in the process of their joining the shivir. Inhibiting factors were either

from the family of the girl or from the community/village she was living in. The neighbors and other people in the village often opposed and reacted negatively to the participation of the girls in the shivir. Hence, a combination of factors acted as the inhibitors to the girls' participation.

Following inhibiting factors were found to influence the decision of the families :

1. Parental Unwillingness
2. Gender issue
3. Security
4. Reputation of the village
5. Organizational aspect

Table 3.11 : Frequency of responses indicating the Inhibiting Factors influencing Familial decision N = 50

Inhibiting Factor	Responses
1. Parental unwillingness	8 16%
2. Gender issue	10 20%
3. Security	36 72%
4. Reputation of the village	19 38%
5. Organizational aspect	11 22%

( *Italic indicates % of N = 50* )

- Parental Unwillingness: for most of the girls it was the unwillingness of their own parents that inhibited them to join the camp. Parents were either ignorant, did not value the education of their daughters and/or saw any logic in sending them to school at this age. They did not think it is important enough to send their daughters to the school.

Suman, 15 years old attended the 4<sup>th</sup> camp and lives in village Binjharwaali. She was eager to join the camp with other girls of the village but her parents were not willing to send her to the camp because she was too old to study. Suman said, *“my parents earlier thought that I was old enough to get married and take responsibility of the house and had no time for education. But, later, with constant efforts from the organizational worker they realized the importance of the shivir decided to send me to the shivir”*.

Parents also had little faith in the education system, as their children who had been sent to local schools had learnt little. They believed educating their girls would be a mere waste of time, as it has been in schools.

Leela who is 13 yrs old and resides in village Nakodesar attended the 4<sup>th</sup> shivir. She was very interested in joining the shivir seeing the other girls from her village who had participated in it. But her parents were not willing to send her saying that it was a mere waste of time, as the studies in the camp would be no better than the school in their village which is not functioning properly. It was only after constant efforts from the organizational worker and her uncle that her parents agreed to send her to the shivir.

- Gender Issue : it is not just the personal unwillingness of the parents but also the wider social aspects that pulled them back from sending their girls to the shivir. Most of the girls responded that from their neighbors and larger community their families faced several pressures. They argued giving several reasons. Education for girls is not important for them. Educating the girls and especially sending them out of the village for it was something that was not accepted in the villages. Few realized the link between girl child education and family prosperity and well being.

Shyama, who is 14 years old, resides in a *dhani* of 4SLD, and attended the fourth shivir. She said, *“My parents agreed to send me to the shivir as my sister had already participated in one of the shivirs, but our neighbors who have always been against this, tried to persuade my parents to not to send me. They said that education has no importance in a girl’s life. They were even more adamant when my sister was sent to the shivir. But my parents did not listen to them.”*

They were willing to try new and alternative education sources, than schools, for their sons who they believed needed to get jobs and enhance family earning, but not for the girls.

Dhapu, 14 years old, attended the fourth camp and presently lives in village Nakodesar. She said, *“everyone says that girls do not need to go to school because they do not have to earn in future. Education is only important for boys who have to work hard to earn money for their livelihood”*.

Since these girls were older – adolescents – growing them for their marriage or ‘gauna’ were important concerns for parents. Education did not seem to provide the skills they needed and hence was insignificant. What was more important is training them in household as well as the farm work, which makes their daughters eligible for marriage.

All the more, many of the girls are already married. Parents were not willing to send their daughters to shivir as they were not sure how the in-law family would perceive their participation. In case of some girls their parents-in-law clearly did not want them to attend the shivir.

Sharda is 15years old living in the Village Rambagh who attended the 1<sup>st</sup> camp and is presently studying in Class 9<sup>th</sup> in a school out of her village. According to her, *“the girls in the village are restricted from joining the shivir by their parents as they think that education is not needed for the girls because their ultimate job is to take care of the household and the field work. Moreover, many girls cannot go to the shivir because they are already married and their in-laws do not allow them to do so”*.

Thus, age of the girls and the mere fact that they were females was the major hindrance that they had to face in the community.

- Security : most parents thought that the shivir was not a safe place for girls to be sent for a period as long as six months. They were worried about who would look after their actions and interactions, they could fall into bad company or even be innocently abused or molested.

Sumitra, from the village Rambagh, who is 18years old attended the 1<sup>st</sup> camp. Her father was not willing to send her to the camp because he was not sure about the safety at the camp. Though her aunt and her mother wanted her to go and thus, tried to convince her father for the same. So, he visited the campus himself to see the food and living arrangements and it was only when he was satisfied that he sent his daughter to the camp.

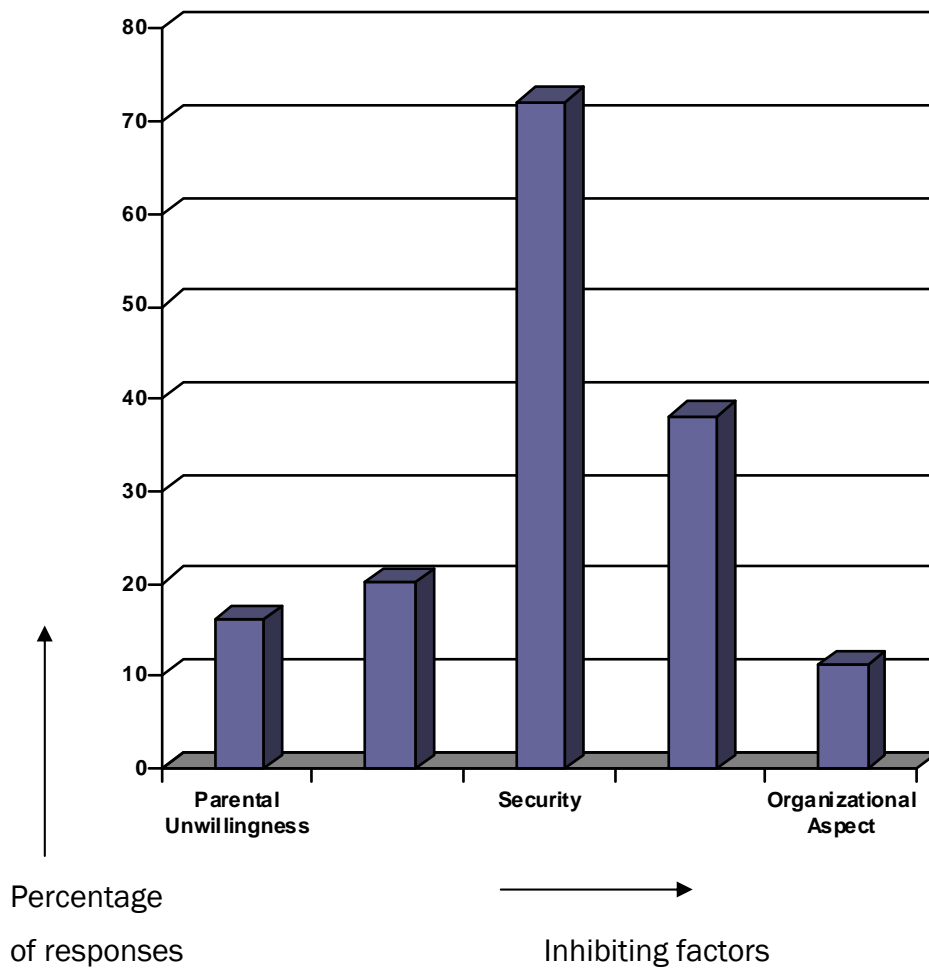
- Reputation of the village : it was seen that the neighbors were not happy with the parents who wanted to send their daughters to the shivir, especially, for many girls who attended the first camp. The most common reason being that the girls would bring a bad name to the village. They did not like the fact that girls can go out of the village and stay with the girls from other villages. Further, since the camp had no restrictions for people's participation, girls would interact with other caste groups (lower castes) which would pollute them and would be against the norms of their village community.

Munni is a 16 year old resident of the 4SLD, who attended the 2nd camp. She was always interested in going to the village school, but could not join due to economic reasons and because very few girls were enrolled in the school at that time. With the coming up of the Balika Shivir her parents were really keen to send her as this was the only opportunity for her to learn to read and write. But the neighbours were not happy with the decision and opposed them because education is not important for girls. They also said, "*Munni should not go out of the village as she was in the marriageable age and sending her away from home would bring bad name to the village*".

- Organizational aspect : the villagers not only condemned the parents of the girls but also were against the organization and did not like the program. Most of the people were not sure about the nature of the program or had much faith in the organization. Hence, they gave several reasons restricting the girls from joining the shivir. According to them, the shivir was not a safe place for the girls, moreover, it was meant for singing and dancing and not studying. The shivir was compared to the schools concluding that the schools were better as they do not teach extra curricular activities which are a mere waste of time.

Maina who is 15 years old lives in the Village Khari of Kalu cluster and attended the 4<sup>th</sup> camp. She has always been keen to attend the camp like her other friends. But the people in the village were against it saying that the shivir was not good and only singing and dancing is taught without giving any attention to studies. Also, one had to stay with the girls of other castes which is against their religion.

Fig. 3.11 RESPONSES FOR INHIBITING FACTORS INFLUENCING FAMILIAL DECISION



### 3.2.1b Facilitating Factors :

These factors were the positive or the supporting factors that motivated the parents of the girls and helped them to take the decision of sending their daughters to the shivir. Such support was provided from the organization and its workers, or from the family members and in some cases from the local leaders and the girls who had already attended the shivir.

Following inhibiting factors were found to influence the decision of the families :

- Organizational support
- Family member support
- Opinion leaders

Table 3.12 : Frequency of responses indicating the Facilitating Factors influencing Familial decision N = 50

	Facilitating Factors	Responses
1	Organizational Support	50 100%
2	Family Member Support	25 50%
3	Opinion Leaders	6 12%

( *Italic indicates % of N = 50* )

- Organizational Support : for all the respondents the support provided from the organization, Urmul, was the most important motivating factor for joining the shivir. The workers of the organization in every village held meetings with the villagers in separate groups to inform them about the camp, its activities and its importance. They even contacted all the people personally helping them in their decision to send their daughters to the shivir. Moreover, the trust that the people have built in Urmul was enough for the parents of the girls to send their daughters with them.



Discussions with the Urmul staff and secondary sources of information revealed that in the initial one or two camps, most of the girls who joined were those whose parents either had good contacts with the organization or were themselves somehow connected with Urmul. But, with time more people have understood what the shivirs are all about. They have also seen the changes in the girls who had participated in the shivirs. Also, the girls who came back from the shivirs helped to spread the awareness regarding the authenticity and importance of these shivirs.

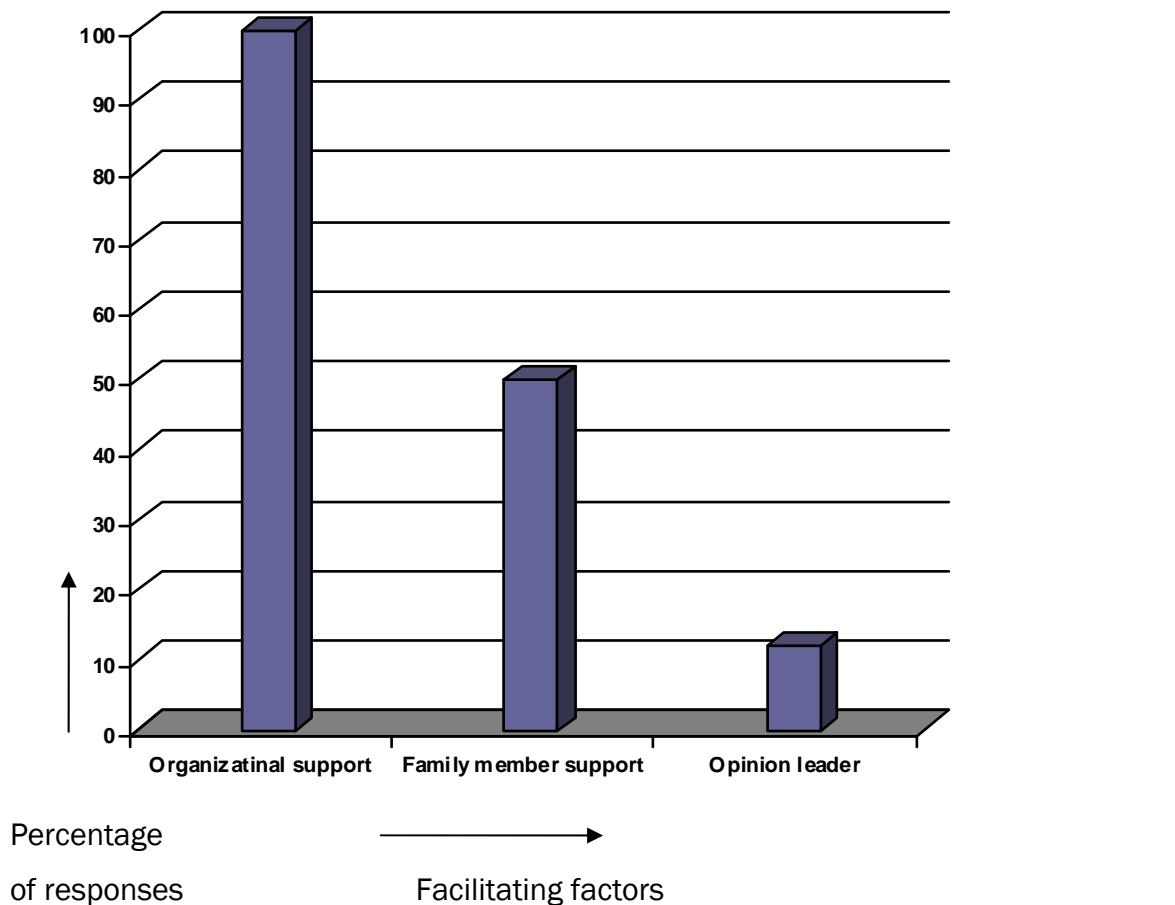
Nirmala is 15 years old living in the Village Rambagh who attended the 4<sup>th</sup> camp. Her parents were not willing to send her to the camp as she was too old to study according to them. But Rameshwariji, the worker from Urmul, persuaded them and convinced them over the time to send her and her sister to the shivir. Also, her friend, Sharda, who had attended the shivir, helped her in motivating her parents to let her participate in the same.

- Family member support : in some cases it was seen that if some of the family members did not agree to send the girls to the shivir, others helped to convince them to do so. Fathers were found to be more rigid than other family members, in sending the girls to the shivir. Usually, the mother, other educated siblings or family members were crucial in convincing the apprehensive family members to change their decision. At times when family opinion was divided, some family members, usually the mother, encouraged the girls to join the camp willing to face criticism on their behalf.

Kamla, from village Binjharwaali is 15 years old and attended the 4<sup>th</sup> camp. Her mother wanted to send her to the shivir with the other girls of the village, and she herself was very keen to participate. But when they talked to her father about the matter, he bluntly refused. Kamla and her other siblings could not even speak a word against their father. She said, *"I had lost hope, yet my mother constantly tried to persuade my father, even though she was very afraid of him, but all in vain"*. With the help of the organizational worker, Kamla's mother sent her to the shivir without the consent of her father. When he came to know about this he was very angry on her, to the extent that he even physically abused her. But her mother is very happy as she could get her

daughter educated, and wants to send her other daughter to the shivir too. But this time she is even more afraid of her husband, who is still against sending their daughters for education. Also, from the same village Radha's parents, who were against their daughter's joining the shivir, were convinced by her younger brother who wanted her to study.

**Fig. 3.12 RESPONSES FOR FACILITATING FACTORS INFLUENCING FAMILIAL DECISION**



- Opinion Leaders : for some girls persons besides their family helped motivate their parents to allow them to join the shivir. These people were the ones in whom the family had faith or trust. They were opinion leaders in the community, usually learned and experienced persons and/or those who had good contacts with the

organization. In some of the villages it was the village school teacher or someone who was either directly working with the organization or was assisting them in their work. These persons, once convinced, acted as important influential links to the parents in the process of convincing them to send their daughters to the camps.

Durga who is 11 years old, resides in Village Doodewali of Rajasar cluster, had attended the 4<sup>th</sup> camp and is presently studying in 6<sup>th</sup> class. Majority of the population of this village are Jaats, and because of some political reasons the people in the village were not interested in sending the girls to the shivir. According to Durga, *“It was only because of Immichandji, who is associated with the Urmul, and on whom all the villagers have trust that my parents allowed me to join the shivir”*. Immichandji along with workers from Urmul could easily convince other parents too.

It was found that both the kinds of factors had their significant effect on the participation of the girls in the shivir. The inhibiting and facilitating factors had a push and pull effect in influencing the family’s decision of sending the girls to the shivir. Negative factors have always prevailed in the society as well as in the minds of the people. It was only when the positive or the facilitating factors were stronger than the negative factors, that the parents were willing to send their daughters to the shivir.

Chawli is a 14 year old girl living in Village Sabania of Arjunsar cluster, who attended the 1<sup>st</sup> camp at the Balika Shivir. She was always interested in learning how to read and write, but could not go to the school, as her father did not agree for the same. However, when her mother came to know about the shivir being organized by the URMUL Trust, she thought that this was a very good opportunity for her daughter to get educated. Her father was still against it, saying that education is not important for girls. The neighbors also condemned her mother saying that she wants to get a bad name to the village, but her mother who became adamant to send Chawli, together with the Urmul worker and other family members could convince the father for sending their daughter.

### 3.3. THE SHIVIR PROGRAM

The curriculum at the shivir was an integrated curriculum. Apart from teaching how to read and write, many other aspects were included in it so as to incorporate and build upon various other skills and abilities in the girls. The curriculum approach that was adopted by the organization for Balika Shivir was decided upon after considering various approaches used by non-formal education programs such as Lok Jumbish, Mahila Samakhya etc. (Urmul, 2001). The teaching method at the shivir was activity based and experiential. The social curriculum included different aspects like, political, social, cultural, gender issues – all of which complemented each other in one or the other way.

The daily activities at the shivir were planned keeping in mind the customary routine and rural set up of the lives of the girls. It was seen that the girls neither feel overburdened nor get disinterested in the activities of the shivir. The teachers for the shivir were selected on the basis of a written test and an interview, and are subsequently given a special training through professionals. Interestingly, in the fifth shivir, two girls who were part of the first shivir will be training the girls.

Through a multifaceted curriculum the girls are exposed to and encouraged to follow new habits with the view of complimenting the things they have learnt for attitudinal and behaviour change. The girls were gradually put in a habit of keeping themselves and their environment clean and hygienic. They were made aware of the gender and caste differences, were made to participate in various activities such as games, dramas, painting, needlework etc. Together with all these, they were provided with nutritious food, good living conditions and a very friendly environment.

Feedback was obtained about the aspects of the curriculum. The following section deals with the –

- Shivir Curriculum
- Suggestions for future shivir program

### 3.3.1 SHIVIR CURRICULUM

Feedback was obtained about the aspects of the curriculum that were liked by the girls who participated in the shivir. These were categorized as follows:

- Studying
- Games
- Creative Work
- Methods and Techniques of Teaching
- Living together

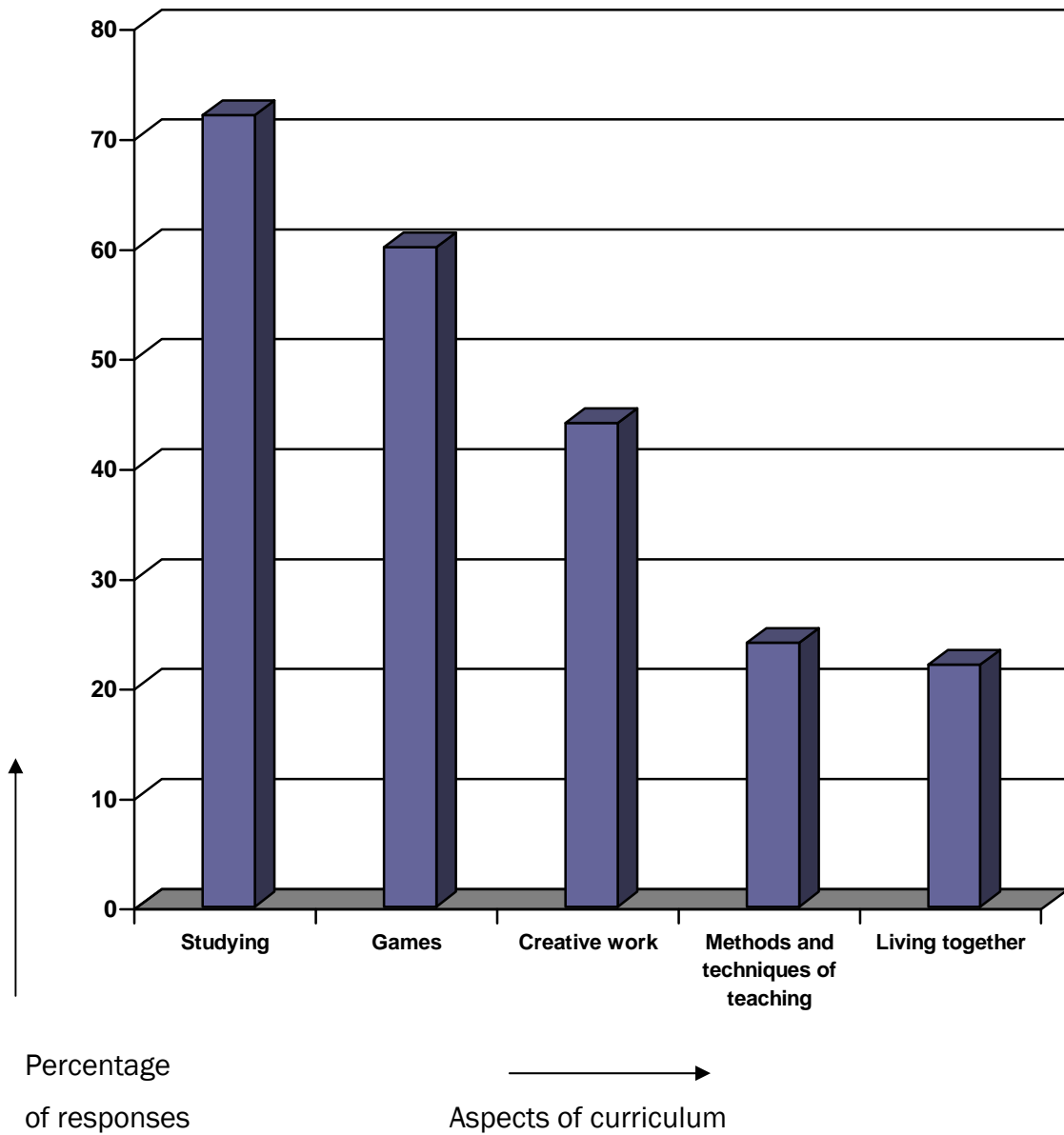
Table 3.13 : Frequency of responses for various aspects of the curriculum at the shivir.

N = 50

S.N.	Curriculum	Responses
1	Studying	36 72%
2	Games	30 60%
3	Creative Work	22 44%
4	Methods and Techniques of Teaching	12 24%
5	Living together	11 22%

( *Italic indicates % of N = 50* )

Fig. 3.13 RESPONSES FOR VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE CURRICULUM AT THE SHIVIR



**Studying** - the girls were provided with the opportunity of learning the three R's of education, viz. reading, writing and arithmetic. Unlike the schools of the villages, proper emphasis was laid on all the three aspects. This was a very good opportunity

for the girls who had always been keen to study, but could not do so because of the improper functioning of the schools in their villages or because other social and economic barriers. Now, they could call themselves 'literate'.

*Raju, who is 13 years old attended the 4<sup>th</sup> shivir and resides in the village Binjharwaali. She said, "it is very important for us to study so that we do not have to depend upon people for reading something. We were taught how to read and write and do calculations in the shivir, which I liked the most".*

Apart from just the text book knowledge, the girls were taught how to read and write letters and were put in a habit of reading newspapers. They were taught how to write notices and were involved in the process of publishing a magazine. One of the most important feature was the library, where girls could read books of their own choice. This further developed in them a reading habit, which would help them to continue enhancing their knowledge.

**Games** - the curriculum at the shivir was such that equal importance was given to all the aspects of development of the girls. It was important to keep the girls physically fit, which was done by involving them in numerous games and sport activities. They were taught various activities such as cycling, badminton, football, rope skipping etc. The most liked activity amongst the girls were cycling and football. The girls had always considered these activities as that meant for only the boys, but now they themselves could practice them which made them feel proud and competent with the male members of their community. Being able to cycle was something that gave them a feeling of being able to do something different from the stereotyped image of the girls. It had been a wonderful and the most exciting activity for almost all the girls in the camp.

*Sharda, is 15 years old from village Rambagh, who attended the first camp. She learnt how to cycle in the shivir and now she cycles down to her school, which is located in a nearby village. As her parents did not have money to buy a cycle, Urmul gave them one so that Sharda could continue her education. Now, she feels*

*that she can compete with the boys of the village and has become independent enough to be able to travel to her school herself, which she used to do with her father earlier.*

All these activities were not meant just to keep the girls physically fit, but to inculcate in them the spirit of team building. The girls had been divided into various groups while working which helped to bring about a healthy competition as well as feeling of harmony and cooperation among them.

**Creative Work** - the curriculum also included activities of art and craft so as to develop and enhance the creative abilities of the girls. They were taught various styles of paintings and drawings, paper folding, making wall hangings and other decorative items, embroidery, knitting, etc.

All the girls were encouraged to work in groups as well as individually and show their own creativity in different activities. They were allowed to take home some of the things made by them so that they could show their parents their skills. Some items such as charts, drawings and paintings were displayed on the walls of the classroom so as to encourage the other girls.

According to Gross, Crandall and Knoll, the concept of desegregation and segregation are important for home management. The activities taught at the shivir were based on these concepts, so as to make the girls understand the recycling and reorganization of available resources at home for better home management.

**Methods And Techniques Of Teaching** - an important feature of the curriculum at the shivir was the methods and techniques used for teaching. The teachers at the shivir were all young women, who had been specially selected and trained for the purpose. They lived with the girls in the campus area and acted as their guardians and caretakers.



Kiran attended the first shivir. She is 16 years old and resides in village Dulmera. She said, *“the ways of teaching in the shivir were full of fun and all the girls enjoyed learning. They were made to do skits and puppet shows along with singing and dancing which helped the girls to take interest in all the issues.”*

The techniques used for teaching were such, so as to build in the interest of the girls in all the activities. The concept of ‘Edutainment’ was brought into practice i.e. to provide education along with entertainment through the use of various arts. Special arts such as drama and puppetry were used to communicate important messages, not isolating the fun and excitement involved. They were made to perform skits and puppet shows with their own hand-made puppets on various issues from their daily lives. The girls found a way of expressing their thoughts and sharing their experiences by involving themselves in role play. This was for the first time that the girls could participate in such activities and speak for themselves. It also helped to improve the inter-personal and communication skills of the girls.

**Living Together** - besides all the above, one of the most important aspect of the shivir was the fact that the girls from different villages/castes, diverse cultures and varied family backgrounds, were made to live together as one big group. This incorporated in them a feeling of ‘oneness’ and made them aware of the insignificance of the differences based on castes and gender. Some of the girls responded ‘living together with everyone’ as the most liked activity at the shivir.

*Bimla, 14 years old, lives in village Dulmera and attended the fourth shivir. According to her, the most important component of the shivir was living together with girls from different castes. She said, “all the girls were hesitant to get along with the girls of the other villages in the beginning. But later we became good friends and did not want to leave each other.”*

The curriculum at the shivir was an integrated curriculum which made the program a multifaceted one. The various aspects of the program helped in the overall development of the girls. Cognitive development helped to increase their general

awareness, provide them with three R's of education and provide them knowledge regarding various social issues. Physical development was included so as to help them to develop physically and enhance their motor skills through various games and sport activities. Emotional development helped the girls to enhance their self-confidence and self-esteem and build in them feelings of team work

### 3.3.2 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE SHIVIR PROGRAMS

Apart from the likings the girls also voiced certain aspects of the program that should be modified or included. There were few expectations that were shown by the girls who participated in the shivir. These were :

- Many girls wanted that the enrolment number for the girls in the shivir should be increased, so that more girls from their village could participate. As per the organization, organizing a shivir requires logistical planning of a number of things ranging from security, food, housing and arranging resource persons. Also, the organization has limited accommodation facilities thus, tried to balance the resources available within the number of girls in a shivir enrolled without compensating quality.
- Most girls wanted that the time span of the shivir should be increased from just six months. The stay in the campus had been a very exciting experience for them, where they could get good food, clothing, a secured and friendly environment, to the extent that some girls did not want to leave the shivir. They were ready to join the shivir again because then they had a set routine within which and they could learn many new things. But this was not possible for the organization as the program had been designed to fit into six months and moreover, the parents of many girls would not agree with the same.
- Almost all the girls desired that the shivir should be extended till middle school, as this was the only way they could continue their education. The organization held a view that the shivirs are organized to create an interest in the girls for

education, so that they can continue the same in the formal education system of their villages. They did not want to create a parallel nor did they want to compete with the existing formal education system.

- Some of the girls wanted that more skill based training such as using sewing machines for stitching should be provided in the shivir. However, the organization personnel acknowledged such skill training was a component not included in the shivir curriculum intentionally, as they intended to have activities apart from the traditional arts that exhibit typical gender stereotype images. Thus more importance was given to activities like games, cycling etc. which the girls would not get the opportunity to learn otherwise.
- Many girls wanted some study material to be sent to them at home after the shivir, so that they could continue to enhance their reading and writing skills and keep in touch with the happenings like special events/news around them. The organization is already working on this aspect, so that they can help the girls who could not join any school, to continue enhancing their knowledge.

### **3.4 EFFECTS OF PARTICIPATION IN THE SHIVIR**

The Balika Shivirs organized by Urmul Setu has a curriculum that is designed to provide exposure beyond the set format of reading and writing. It includes much more than just the books or the black board and gives an opportunity for an all round development of the girls. In addition, the experience of living away from the homes within the campus of the organization is bound to have a multifaceted influence on the girls. Understanding the effects girls perceived because of their participation and assessing the development of life skills in girls who have participated in the shivir vs. those who have not participated provided insights about the multifarious influences on the girls' lives.

The following section deals with :

- Perceived effects of participation
- Life skill development in the girls

### 3.4.1 PERCEIVED EFFECTS OF PARTICIPATION

The girls perceived multifaceted effects of participation in the shivir. These effects focussed on aspects of their personal growth, development and behavioral changes.

The effects the girls perceived were categorized as follows :

- A. Knowledge level.
- B. Interpersonal Skills
- C. Self Confidence
- D. Social Status
- E. Leadership Skills
- F. Aspirations

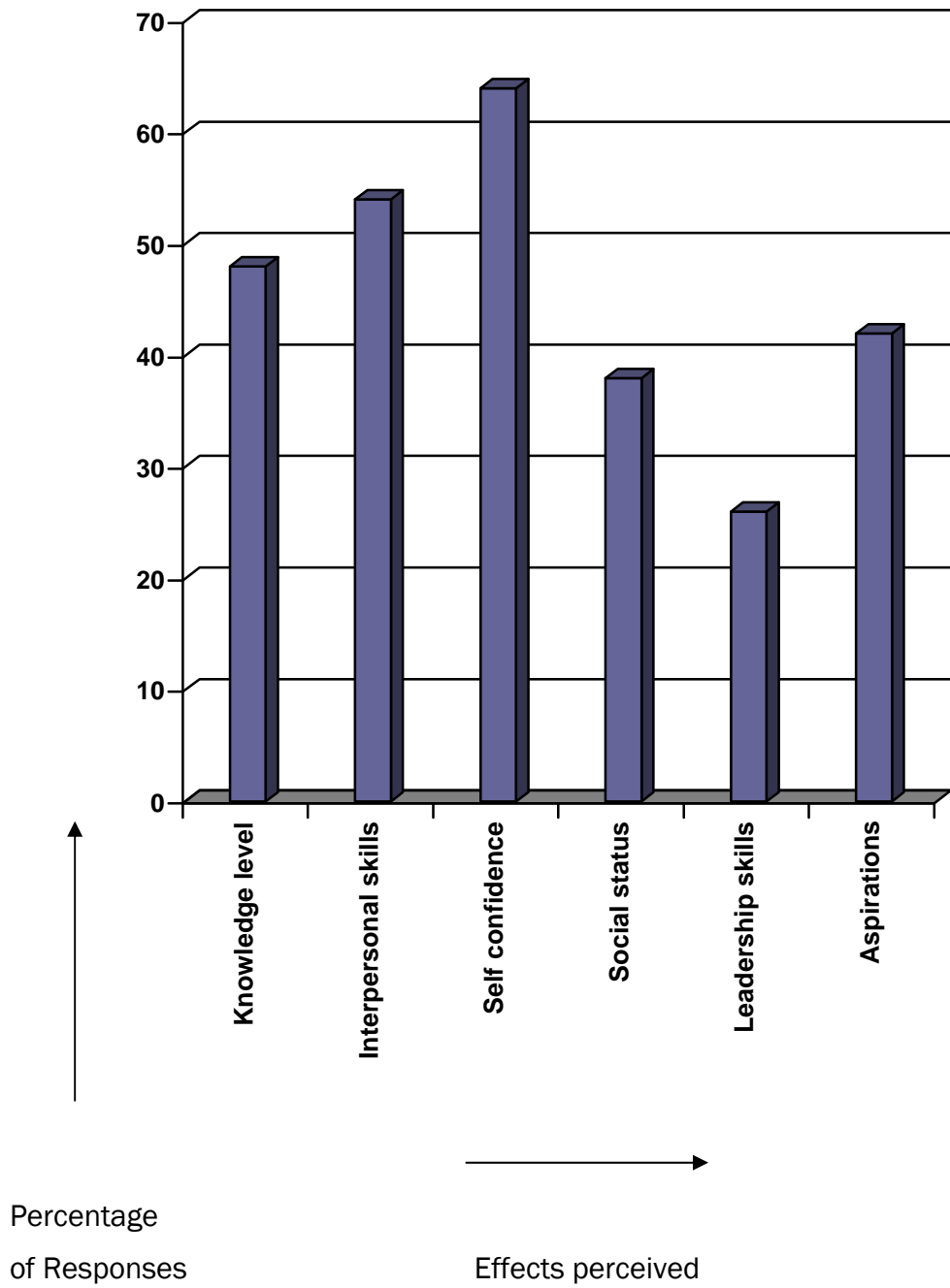
Table 3.14 : Frequency of responses indicating the effects perceived by the girls of their participation in the shivir

N = 50

Perceived effects of participation in the shivir	Responses
1. Knowledge level	24 48%
2. Interpersonal skills	27 54%
3. Self confidence	32 64%
4. Social status	19 38%
5. Leadership skills	13 26%
6. Aspirations	21 42%

\*( *Italic indicates % of N = 50* )

**Fig. 3.14**      **RESPONSES FOR EFFECTS PERCEIVED BY THE GIRLS OF THEIR PARTICIPATION IN THE SHIVIR**



- A. **Knowledge level** - Participation in the shivir provided opportunities to the girls to access a vast array of information. Various activities and programs of the camp helped increase the knowledge level of the girls and have made them more aware about diverse issues.
- The text book knowledge about various subjects that was imparted made them more aware. Also, the teaching focussed on practical implications of this knowledge in their daily lives. The knowledge that the shivirs provided was functional and made them more aware of the issues and concerns in their lives. The girls talked about having understood the linkages between the importance of sanitation, cleanliness, nutrition and disease prevention and about reproductive health, safe motherhood and child health. They got the opportunity to talk and clarify the knowledge about their body parts and about reproductive health, which is usually a taboo among their family members or friends.

*Raju, from village Khari, is 15 years old who attended the first camp. She said, “she is much more aware about herself than other girls”. She knows about the importance of cleanliness during menstruation, and does not feel hesitant to talk about it like other girls of her age do.*

*Leela, who is 13 years old attended the 4<sup>th</sup> camp and resides in village Nakodesar. She can now understand the importance of good nutrition for good health, and is aware of various diseases and their prevention, unlike the other girls of her age who had not participated in the shivir. She said, “other girls of the village who did not participate in the shivir have unhygienic way of living and they do not know about the various diseases they can prevent by remaining clean”.*

- The reading and writing skills, which the girls learnt in the shivirs, have helped the girls stay abreast and continue furthering their knowledge in day to day activities. The shivir provided the girls opportunity to understand the practical importance of education and the need for information. This understanding has led to the shivir girls always wanting to explore and become more open to activities that help them enhance their knowledge. In the shivirs they were exposed to newspapers and letters which has helped the girls to develop interest in reading newspapers

and writing letters. Through these habits they continue to learn more about various issues and the happenings around them.

*Sarita, living in village Doodewaali is 14 years old and she attended the 2<sup>nd</sup> camp. She feels that she is aware of the significance of education in her life, unlike the other village girls who think that learning to read and write is merely a waste of time. "Other girls are more interested in just sitting and chatting rather than utilizing their time for education. But, the girls who attended the shivir, feel that education plays an important role in their lives, and in their free time some of them would rather like to read a newspaper or practice their other skills, than just chatting with friends." They also try to convince and motivate their family members or their friends so as to make more girls join the shivir.*

**B. Interpersonal Skills** - They are one of the most important aspect of one's personality. The girls perceived that participation in the shivir helped them to improve and refine their interpersonal skills. The girls felt that they could communicate with the people in a better way than the other girls. They thought that this was because of the exposure and the opportunity they received, to interact with different people in the shivir.

- The girls who attended the shivir felt that they were able to easily talk to the strangers. Other girls felt very hesitant to interact with anyone who is new to them. It was found that while interacting with them in the focussed group discussions, it was the girls who participated in the shivirs who could take the lead of communicating with the group. Other girls had to be probed and prompted to do so. The girls, after attending the shivir, felt that they could explain themselves easily and in a more effective manner than before. They felt that they could understand their own feelings and communicate them to other people in a better way than the girls who did not attend the shivir.

*Dhapi, 13 yrs old, who is a resident of village Sabania, attended the first camp and is presently studying in class 9<sup>th</sup> of her village school. She said, "before attending the camp, she felt very shy while talking to people and hence could not interact with them easily. But now, she is confident and can even talk to strangers*

*easily*". She thinks that she can understand her own self in a better way than before.

- These girls could understand and make use of "Hindi" as their second language which other girls could not. Most of the other girls could not speak any other language than their own dialect. The girls who participated in the shivir felt that they are more refined as they could communicate with the people who come from outside their community easily.
- The girls learnt to work together in groups and as a team. It helped build in them a feeling of 'oneness' for all as well as made them understand the worth of teamwork. Groups in the shivir brought diverse girls together. Girls different in nature, age, likes/dislikes, geographical, economic and caste backgrounds worked together. At times, in sport activities together trying to win a match or in art and craft activities working together towards a common goal, gave the girls the opportunity to help break the barriers in their minds.

Sharda, 15 yrs old, resident of village Rambagh, attended the first camp and is presently studying in class 9<sup>th</sup> in a nearby village school. She feels that, *"shivir has made her learn many new skills and activities, like cycling, various art & craft works, puppetry etc. which she otherwise would have missed. Apart from this they got an opportunity to live and work together with the girls of other villages and castes"*. She said, *"this has made them more friendly and have belief in cooperation and team work"*.

The girls, in the shivir, got an opportunity to live with people from diverse backgrounds, which they could have never received otherwise. The whole process of interaction with girls of different villages/castes, workers who are both males and females as well as people/visitors to the organization who have varied cultures, gives them exposure and opportunities to enhance their interpersonal skills.



- C. **Self Confidence** - The girls perceived that participation in the shivir has helped them to gain confidence and, felt that they now had the ability to act independently in various ways.
- The shivir provided the girls opportunities for diverse learning, which has helped them to enhance their knowledge. They felt that their knowledge and awareness about various things had made them more confident in day to day life. The fact that, in the camp they did many things for the first time, which they thought they never could and did them, well enhanced their self confidence manifold and made them willing to try new things or face them boldly. Activities like cycling, drama, various games and other skill building activities in the shivir, were some of those that the girls got opportunity to do for the first time. These would otherwise never have come their way. Learning to cycle was an activity that has made them more independent and given them the confidence that they could also do it like boys.
  - Participating in the shivir brought the girls in contact with diverse groups of people. Most girls are in contact with the organization with whom they still maintain good friendly relations. Urmul workers, also, try and keep in touch with them on a regular basis. Their close contacts with the organization is recognized in the community, as they are considered as the girls who have personal contacts with the people from Urmul, which further enhances the feeling of self confidence. After attending the shivir, because of their increased knowledge, the contacts they had developed, they were helping people – their family members as well as other people in the village – in various ways. Their family members as well as their peer group often sought advice from them. This, according to them, is because of the various skills that they are now aware of and their enriched knowledge.

Surja, from Dulmera village who is 15 years old and attended the 1<sup>st</sup> camp, feels that her family members are proud of her as now she knows how to read and write, and so, can help them in reading and writing of letters and in calculative work at home. She herself

feels that she is more confident than before as she knows much more now.

- Be it decisions about small health matters, how should they conduct themselves or the mere fact that they could fall back on the organization for any assistance helped boost their self-confidence. The girls felt that they could easily convince people as compared to other girls of their age. They thought that they could make people understand their own feelings as well as understand other people's behavior and feelings in a better way than before.

Maina, who attended the 4<sup>th</sup> shivir is 15 years old and lives in village Khari. She learned to read and write letters in the shivir, and now she writes letters to the teachers who taught her at the shivir. She likes to keep in touch with the people of the organization and feels that this gives her more importance among the people of the village.

- D. **Social Status** - it was found that the girls who participated in the shivir perceived that they enjoyed an enhanced social status subsequently. They gave several reasons that they perceived which contributed to their enhanced social status.
- They can call themselves 'literate' in the family as well as in the community. This provides them a feeling of self-respect and dignity. Their family members introduced them as an educated child/girl, which made them and their family members proud.

Shyama, 15 years old, resident of village 4SLD attended the 1<sup>st</sup> shivir. She was very keen to join the school of her village, but could not do so because of economic reasons and household duties. She said, *"Shivir provided me the opportunity to fulfill my dream of being able to read and write, and now I feel proud when people address me as 'literate'."*

- People who had sent their daughters to the shivir are able to get better matrimonial alliances for their daughters as compared to other parents. The girls themselves felt that they were more smart and cultured than the girls who did not participate in the shivir. Because of the enhanced knowledge and contacts the

girls are involved in the decision-making activities at home and at times also for their friends. The parents of the girls like them to participate in the household matters and their siblings like to take their advice for solving various problems.

Tillu from village Sodhwaali who is 14 years old, attended the 2<sup>nd</sup> camp. She said, *“Since I came back from the camp my family members involve me in the household decision making and planning various activities and I am considered more responsible than before”*. She feels that she has an improved social status.

The girls felt that they were socially more acceptable among the adolescents of their village than the girls who did not participate in the shivir, as they have become the ‘preferred group’ of their community. This has further added on to their enhanced social status.

E. **Leadership Skills** - the shivir has not only made the girls gain more confidence to interact effectively and helped them to be more socially acceptable but has also helped them to attain leadership qualities and become socio-politically more active.

- Many of the girls, after attending the shivir, have gained the positions of local leaders amongst the adolescents of their village. They perceived that they could easily influence other girls who come to them for taking advice over various issues. The girls have developed interest in organizing community groups like forming mahila / kishori mandals and mobilizing them to participate in community welfare activities. They often help the workers of the Urmul organization for the interest of their community as well in motivating the parents of the other girls to send their daughters to the shivir.

Chhotibai, 15 years old, from village Nakodesar, attended the 4<sup>th</sup> camp and has been always been keen to study, but could not join the school in her village as it was not functioning properly. Now, she is very happy as she got the opportunity to attend the shivir and learn many more activities than she could have learned in the

school. Apart from this, she has become more confident and socially more active. She initiated in her village the formation of mahila mandal and motivated women to join it, with the help of other women of the village. She said, “ *I wanted to do something for my village and Promilaji (the Urmul worker) helped me to organize the mahila mandal like in other villages. I could motivate five women in the beginning, to join the group, but gradually the number is increasing*”.

- The girls who participated in the shivir unlike other villagers do not differentiate on the grounds of castes. They believe in living together, as was taught to them in the shivir. They also, in their own small ways, try to work towards removing the gender differences and other social inequalities that prevail at their homes and community.

Sharda, 15 yrs old, resident of village Rambagh, attended the first camp and is presently studying in class 9<sup>th</sup> in a nearby village school. She feels that shivir taught them how to live in peace with other people unlike the villagers who keep fighting on issues of caste and religion. Sharda said, “*In the beginning of the shivir it was difficult for us to stay and eat with the girls from other castes but gradually we were taught that we were not different from each other and we should live together in harmony. Now, we can understand the insignificance of the caste differences that prevail in the village.*”

- F. ***Aspirations of the girls*** - it was found the effects of the shivir were not just restricted to the present behavior of the girls but also influenced their aspirations for the future.
- Most of the girls wanted to continue with their education after having been to the shivir. They have developed an interest towards studies and they can realize the significance of education in their lives. Many have been able to join the schools but others still face many barriers in their way of further education.
  - The girls not only desired to participate in the shivir for further education but also wanted to teach there. They felt that teaching other girls of their age from similar

socio-economic backgrounds was a very noble thought, which they should bring into practice.

Dhuri, who attended the 4<sup>th</sup> camp, is 13 years old and lives in village Sodhwaali. She wants to continue her education as she could only complete Class III in the shivir, but cannot as her parents would not allow her to do so. She even wishes to teach in the shivir, inspired from the young teaching staff in the campus, who very friendly and caring. She said, *“if given a chance, I would like to teach other girls of her village in the shivir”*.

- Many girls voiced that they wanted to utilize the skills taught at the shivir for income generation, so that they could become one of the earning members of the family. According to them, this would increase their status at home as well as among other girls. Moreover, they could be a help to their parents/husbands by becoming economically independent.

Nirmala, 15 years old from village Rambagh, attended the 4<sup>th</sup> camp and is presently studying in class 6<sup>th</sup> of her village school. She feels that many skills taught at the shivir can be utilized to earn money for their families. After finishing her education in school, she wants to teach how to make puppets to other girls of the village and even sell them if possible.

- Few girls even wished to go out of their villages to work, as their brothers have been doing. Some of the girls wanted to work as an Urmul worker and help the people of their own village and other villages to live a better life. They had a strong desire to motivate and encourage women and girls to learn to read and write, as well as help them to empower themselves economically and socially.

All the above effects were found to be related to each other and were not in isolation. They were interrelated and interdependent. Moreover, all these effects were beyond just the personality and behavior of the girls. Participation of the girls in the shivir has affected their families as well as the people of the community, which is shown through their behavior change for the girls. There has been a resonating effect between the girls themselves, their families and the community they live in, regarding the changes due to the participation in the shivir.

### 3.4.2 LIFE SKILL DEVELOPMENT IN THE GIRLS.

Assessment of the life skills development of the girls who had attended the shivir and to compare it with that of the girls who did not participate in the shivir was an important aspect of the present study. This assessment was carried out by administering the Life Skill Assessment Inventory, specially designed to suit the study, on both the groups of the girls viz. those who participated in the shivir as well as those who did not.

Life skills are individual skills/abilities that each one of us possess and yet, need to enhance them in order to meet the challenges of the life. Effective acquisition of life skills can influence the way one feels about oneself and others and can enhance one's productivity, efficacy, self-esteem and self-confidence. They also provide tools and techniques to improve interpersonal relations. There are three broad areas of life skills: Thinking skills, Social skills and Negotiating skills. During adolescence the development of these skills is more active a process which indicates establishment of individuality and independence. (Govt. of India, 2001)

The inventory contained questions on different aspects of life skills which had to be scored on a five point scale by the girls. The averages of these scores were used as the final scores for each girl of both the groups.

The hypothesis used in the testing for the difference between the two groups of scores was : there is no difference between the life skill development of the girls who participated in the shivir and those who did not.

After the application of T-test to the two set of scores, the values for 't' for the four aspects were compared to the value for 't critical', and it was found that there was a significant difference between the scores of the two groups. Thus, the hypothesis was

rejected, showing that there was a significant difference between the life skill development of the girls who participated in the shivir and those who did not.

The Table 3.15 verifies that there was a significant difference between the girls who attended the shivir and those who did not, regarding their life skills development. These life skills were indicated by three aspects viz. the thinking skills, the social skills and the negotiating skills.

Table 3.15 : Average scores for life skill development of the girls who attended the shivir and those who did not.

Life Skills	Average Scores		t - Values
	Shivir	Non-shivir	
1. Thinking Skills	4.43	3.72	7.10 *
2. Social Skills	4.46	3.84	7.75 *
3. Negotiating Skills	4.45	3.99	4.18 *
4. Total	4.45	3.87	7.25 *

t-critical = 1.66  
 \* Significant at  $\leq .05$

Thinking skills include problem solving, thinking critically, processing information and exercising choice, making informed decisions and setting goals. It was found that the girls who participated in the shivir scored high on these skills. They were very confident while answering for these questions as compared to the girls who did not participate in the shivir. The girls who attended the shivir could not only think

critically and take decisions for themselves, but helped others – family members and peer group – in problem solving and decision making.

Munni, from 4SLD is 16 years old and attended the second camp. She felt that after attending the shivir she had become more active in terms of problem solving. She said, *“I can now solve many of the problems myself and I can understand the cause of the problem more easily, as compared to my other friends”*

Maina, 15 years old, lives in village Khari and attended the fourth shivir. She said, *“I can help my family members especially siblings, in the decision making in various ways. I have gained confidence to do any kind of work.”*

Social skills include appreciating/validating others; building positive relationship with peer groups and family; listening and communicating effectively; taking responsibility; and coping with stress. The inventory administered included aspects of self-reflection, working with others and communicating effectively. It was observed that the girls who had participated in the shivir could understand the behavior of their own as well as others easily, as compared to the other girls.

Chhotibai is 15 years old and resides in the village Nakodesar. She attended the first camp. Her friend, Reshma, also wanted to participate in the shivir but could not, as her parents were not willing to send her. Chhotibai felt that after attending the shivir she had become more confident and aware as compared to Reshma and had an enhanced social status in the village. While interacting with the two girls, it was felt that Chhotibai had better communicating skills and could understand us easily as compared to Reshma, who was very shy to talk to us.

Negotiating skills include self-realization that enables an individual to understand ones values, goals, strengths and weaknesses. Thus negotiating skills need to be enhanced at two levels – within oneself and with others. The girls perceived that those girls who had attended the shivir negotiate with self at times of stress as well as with others, when needed, more easily.

Seema, from village Doodewaali is 15 years old and attended the first shivir. She felt that she could understand viewpoint of the other person and make others understand her own views in a better way than before. She also said, *“ I can easily interact with a*



*group of people and can help to settle arguments between two people”.*

The Balika Shivar Program is a multifaceted program, which includes all the above aspects of life skills development. The curriculum was such designed so as to provide a broad base of knowledge to the girls through innovative means and methods. The content chosen for responding to the girls needs of development of skills – thinking, social and negotiating – reflected the basic cognitive, physical and emotional elements of development.

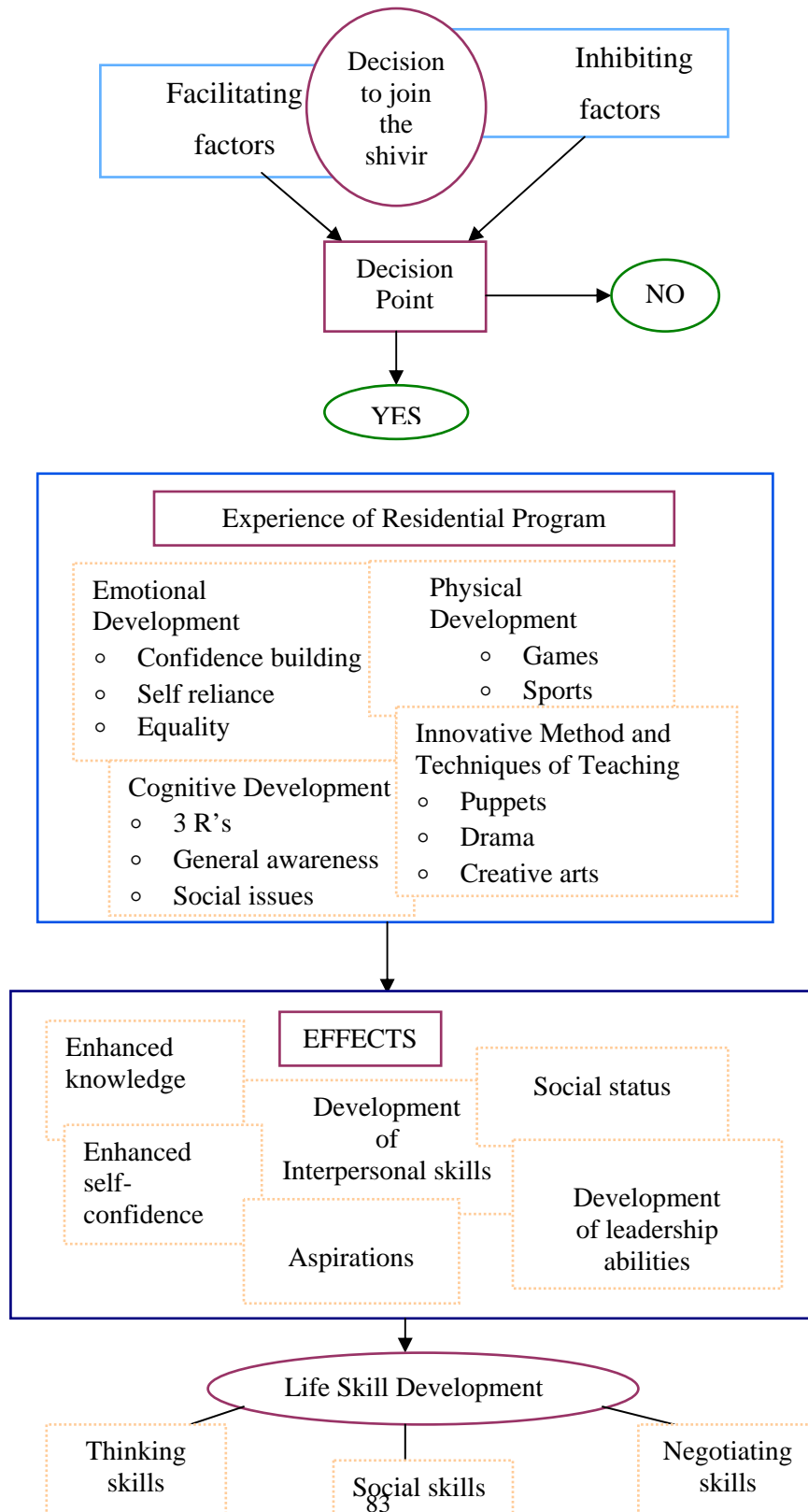
In addition, there were efforts to build in them confidence and self-esteem, as well as awareness of their social and political environments. Apart from this, there was also an effort to address rights of children especially the girl child, so as to make them understand the social and political structures that influence them.

Functionality and awareness building were important core components of the ‘Learning’ of this program, and was not just limited to the 3Rs and clearing school subjects. This multidimensional focus of the program has enabled the girls to enhanced their capacity to deal with fresh learning situations and decision making in unexpected situations. This was a deliberate effort of the organization, so as to develop amongst the girls skills that could equip them to deal with real life situations. The Balika Shivar Program was organized with the objective of encouraging the girls to continue their education through the formal education system. This program was an alternative and not a substitute to the existing formal system in the villages, which the girls were not able to join due to various barriers.

In the remote arid areas of Rajasthan, where hardly any importance is given to education, sending their young girls out of the village for a six-month residential education program, was a crucial decision for the people. The decision of the family,

whether to send their girls to the shivir or not will always be governed by two kinds of factors, the negative or the Inhibiting factors and the positive or the Facilitating factors. Yet the effect on the girls and its long term impact as families and communities begin to understand has created a dynamogenic effect as the numbers wanting to send their daughters to the shivir steadily mounts and the organization faces more and more pressure for conducting more shivirs. In rural Rajasthan people seem to consider shivir as a good method for educating their girls, where the state run school remain largely non-existent or non-functional. Whether the shivirs are a viable alternative for the education of girls remains a point of debate yet. At present they seem to be a successful a viable alternative for the education of the adolescent girl child.

Fig. 3b Conceptual framework of the study –



## CHAPTER - 4

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Literacy is not the end of education nor even the beginning. It is one of the means whereby man and woman can be educated. Education is one of the important variables that determine the status of women. Areas where there is low female literacy, are also characterized by under-development, low employment, low per capita income, low nutritional level with heavy concentration of scheduled communities and landless agricultural workers. Low female literacy is highly correlated to high fertility rates, high population growth rate, and high infant and child mortality rate. In a state like Rajasthan, which has the lowest literacy rates, harsh terrain and a low status of girl child, universalization of education is a challenge. A scheme being undertaken in Rajasthan, entitled Balika Shivirs – a six month residential educational camp for girls – has been implemented by Urmul Trust with the support of Lok Jumbish. The response to the program from the community has been overwhelming and a need was felt to study the reasons that led to the girl's participation in the shivirs and to know the effects of their participation on their lives. Thus, the present study, "MAPPING RURAL ADOLESCENT GIRLS' PARTICIPATION IN RESIDENTIAL NON-FORMAL EDUCATION PROGRAM – A STUDY IN LUNKARANSAR BLOCK, RAJASTHAN " was undertaken.

The main objective of the study was to understand the dimensions of rural adolescent girl's participation in the Balika Shivar Program. This would include the profiles of the girls who participated in the shivar, the reasons that led to their participation and the effects of their participation on their lives. The study also included the comparison of life skill development between the girls who attended the shivar and those who did not.

The study was undertaken in the Lunkaransar block of Bikaner District in Western Rajasthan, where the Balika Shivar Program is being organized by Urmul Trust. A sample of 100 girls (50 who had attended and 50 who had not attended the shivar) was taken from ten villages from where the girls had participated in the program. The data was collected using the interview schedule and focussed group discussions. The life skills of the girls was assessed by administering the Life Skill Assessment Inventory.

#### FINDINGS :

##### ✓ PROFILE OF THE GIRLS WHO ATTENDED THE SHIVIR

- Socio-economic profile – it provided insights about the realities of the lives of the girls.
  - The girls who participated in the shivar were mostly in the age group of 10 – 15 years and were unmarried.
  - The families to which the girls belonged were mostly engaged in agriculture and animal husbandry. Some were engaged in mining or were self employed.
  - The income of their families was quiet low.
  - Majority of the girls belonged to lower castes in their community.
  - After the shivar, 49% of the girls could continue their education in the formal education system of their villages.
- Barriers to education  
The girls perceived various barriers that prevented them from joining the formal education system viz.
  - Economic – 52% perceived that they could not continue their education due to poverty.

- Social – 68% girls perceived that social norms like age, gender were a hindrance in their education.
- Structural – 48% felt that they could not continue their education because of structural barriers within the education system.

✓ DECISION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE SHIVIR

Understanding the factors that led to the girls, from an economically and socially backward area, participate in a residential six-month program of education provided valuable insights. The decision of the girls' participation in the shivir was the one that was largely made by their families. This decision was influenced by two kinds of factors – the inhibiting factors and the facilitating factors – from within the family as well as from the community.

- Inhibiting factors –
  - Parental unwillingness – for 16% of the girls, their parents were either ignorant or did not value the education of their daughters.
  - Gender issue – most of the girls responded that from their neighbours and larger community their families faced several pressures regarding various social norms.
  - Security – majority of the girls, i.e. 72% perceived that their parents thought that the shivir was not a safe place for girls to be sent for a period as long as six months.
  - Reputation of the village – many girls responded that their neighbours tried to persuade their parents to not to send them to the shivir, as this might bring a bad name to the village.
  - Organizational aspect – most of the people were not sure about the nature of the program. The shivir was compared to the schools concluding that the schools were better as they do not teach extra curricular activities which are a mere waste of time.

- Facilitating factors –
  - Organizational support – for all the respondents the support provided from the organization, Urmul, was the most important motivating factor for joining the shivir. The trust that the people have built in Urmul was enough for the parents of the girls to send their daughters with them.
  - Family member support – in some cases it was seen that if some of the family members did not agree to send the girls to the shivir, others helped to convince them to do so.
  - Opinion leaders – for 12% of the girls persons besides their family helped motivate their parents to allow them to join the shivir. These people were the ones in whom the family had faith or trust.

It was found that both the kinds of factors had their significant effect on the participation of the girls in the shivir. It was only when the positive or the facilitating factors were stronger than the negative factors, that the parents were willing to send their daughters to the shivir.

#### ✓ THE SHIVIR PROGRAM

Feedback was obtained regarding the various aspects of the program liked by the girls. These were –

- Studying – the girls were provided with the opportunity of learning the three R's of education, viz. reading, writing and arithmetic.
- Games – the curriculum at the shivir was such that equal importance was given to all the aspects of development of the girls. It was important to keep the girls physically fit, which was done by involving them in numerous games and sport activities.
- Creative work – the curriculum also included activities of art and craft so as to develop and enhance the creative abilities of the girls.

- Methods and techniques of teaching – The techniques used for teaching were such, so as to build in the interest of the girls in all the activities.
- Living together – besides all the above, one of the most important aspect of the shivir was the fact that the girls from different villages/castes, diverse cultures and varied family backgrounds, were made to live together as one big group.

The curriculum at the shivir was an integrated curriculum which made the program a multifaceted one. The various components of the program were :

- Cognitive development – to increase their general awareness, provide them with three R's of education and provide them knowledge regarding various social issues.
- Physical development – to help them to develop physically and enhance their motor skills through various games and sport activities.
- Emotional development – to enhance their self-confidence and self-esteem and build in them feelings of team work.
- All these were brought about through the use of innovative methods and techniques of teaching.
- Suggestions of the girls for future shivir programs – there were a few expectations shown by the girls. They wanted that the enrolment number of the girls and the time span of the shivir should be increased, and the shivir should be extended up to middle level. they wanted more skill based training to be included and wanted that they should be provided with some study material after the shivir so that they can continue learning.

#### ✓ EFFECTS OF PARTICIPATION IN THE SHIVIR

Understanding the effects girls perceived because of their participation and assessing the development of life skills in girls who have participated in the shivir vs.



those who have not participated provided insights about the multifarious influences on the girls' lives.

- The effects, that the girls perceived, due to their participation in the shivir were –
  - Enhanced Knowledge – Participation in the shivir provided opportunities to the girls to access a vast array of information. Various activities and programs of the camp helped increase the knowledge level of the girls and have made them more aware about diverse issues.
  - Development of interpersonal skills – 54% of the girls perceived that participation in the shivir helped them to improve and refine their interpersonal skills. The girls felt that they could communicate with the people in a better way than the other girls.
  - Enhanced self-confidence – 64% girls perceived that participation in the shivir has helped them to gain confidence and, felt that they now had the ability to act independently in various ways.
  - Improved social status – it was found that the girls who participated in the shivir perceived that they enjoyed an enhanced social status subsequently.
  - Development of leadership abilities – the shivir has not only made the girls gain more confidence to interact effectively and helped them to be more socially acceptable but has also helped them to attain leadership qualities and become socio-politically more active.
  - Aspirations of the girls – the effects of the shivir were not just restricted to the present behavior of the girls but also influenced their aspirations for the future.

- Life skill development of the girls –
  - Assessment of the life skills development of the girls who had attended the shivir and to compare it with that of the girls who did not participate in the shivir was an important aspect of the present study.
  - It was found that there was a significant difference between the girls who attended the shivir and those who did not, regarding their life skills development.
  - These life skills were indicated by three aspects viz. the thinking skills, the social skills and the negotiating skills.

Thus, it could be concluded, that participation of rural adolescent girls in the residential non-formal education program had a multifaceted effect on their lives. In the first place, it was a difficult decision to be made by the family members of the girls, who had to face various oppositions in order to send their girls out of the community for education. It was only when they were themselves satisfied with the importance of education in the lives of their daughters that they allowed them to join the shivir. The shivir program had a multifaceted curriculum and provided the girls with various opportunities to enhance their cognitive, physical and emotional development. The effects of the Balika Shivir were not just restricted to the girls, but were found to be influencing their family and community as well, which could be seen through their behavioral change towards the girls.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study recommendations that can be given are as follows :

- Urmul should develop a system for the continuing enrichment of girls who have participated in shivirs. The girls voiced a strong need to remain in touch with each other and with organization events and happenings. A newsletter produced by the girls for the girls could help maintain their interest, continue guiding them in matters and keep them abreast about local, national and even international events.
- For the girls who had joined the school system after the shivir, special contact program could be organized. These could act in a dual way – acting as reward incentives for those who continued studying as well as support to sustain their efforts for further education by assisting them in their academic problem and if possible in any other difficulties they may face.
- The organization should also explore linking up with open school which are running abridged courses for standard 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> along with standard 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>.